

Minutes of the School Committee  
Regular Meeting  
Milton High Library  
August 8th, 2012

**Committee Present:** Glenn Pavlicek, Chair; Lynda-Lee Sheridan, Vice Chair; Mary Kelly, Kristan Bagley-Jones, Becky Padera. Leroy Walker arrived at 7:25 pm.

**Not Present:**

**Staff Present:** Mary Gormley, Superintendent; John Phelan, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Personnel; Matthew Gillis, Assistant Superintendent for Business.

**Call to Order**

The Chair called the August 8th meeting of the School Committee to order at 7:03 pm.

**Approve Agenda**

The committee approved the agenda after requesting the following edits: move Superintendent Evaluation Tool to Item #2. Although the STEM item will stay on the agenda, there will be no presentation on it tonight. Ms. Sheridan requested to give an update on the Policy Subcommittee's progress.

**Citizens Speak:**

Jim Mulligan came to talk about implementation of French Immersion cap and the potential for starting a lottery for the program. He felt that the lottery should not favor siblings. He also asked for a study on French Immersion and the long-term effects of the program. Asked to find a doctoral student who might want to study the data further. He noted that he couldn't find the Strategic Plan on the MPS website.

Brian Bunn spoke next and urged the committee to take their time making the decision. He is personally against the cap.

**Superintendents Report:**

1. Ms. Gormley called Tanya Walsh, Karen Spaulding and Holly Concannon to the table. She said that one of our goals as a district is to encourage administrators to recognize talent of staff and students at the state and national level. Ms. Gormley announced that Ms. Walsh is a finalist for Presidential Award for Math & Science Teaching by the DESE. This award will be presented in June of 2013.

\*\* Mr. Walker arrived at 7:25 pm. \*\*

2. Next, Ms. Gormley invited Mr. Redden and Mr. Echelson to join Dr. Spaulding and proceeded to introduce all three administrators. She outlined their resumes to date. She thanked the screening committee for their work.

3. Next, Ms. Gormley began to talk about STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math) initiative. This is a pre-K initiative that integrates all of the areas. We are looking at implementing this STEM in our English first grades. Marilyn Decker is on vacation, so there will be no presentation. Professionals from Tufts will help with PD and presentation. This is a Lego-robotics based program. Ms. Gormley told the committee that all first-grade teachers will get Professional Development before the start of the school year. Committee members asked the following questions:

Ms. Kelly: Is this going to add to the present Grade One Science Curriculum?

Ms. Gormley: It will target some of the same units that we currently teach. It will be integrated so that it taps into first grade math skills and first grade science units.

Ms. Kelly: How is this being financed?

Ms. Gormley: We have a science-dedicated budget, which this falls under.

Ms. Bagley Jones: Is this a pilot program? How much work has gone into the roll-out?

Ms. Gormley: We are piloting this the first year, looking to add one grade level each year. The integration of STEM will enhance student instruction.

Ms. Bagley Jones: How does STEM fit into our strategic plan?

Ms. Gormley: It is expected that this will help improve our science MCAS scores.

Ms. Kelly: Why is this for English students only? Why not French Immersion?

Ms. Gormley: It is a similar plan to how we rolled out SmartBoards. WE started with one group of classrooms and kept adding.

Ms. Kelly: Is this an added benefit, a differentiation for English? Are we now changing the idea that French and English are the same curriculum? And, if this is the differentiation, then we need to offer more. The English kids should come out ahead in these areas by high school graduation.

Ms. Gormley: Yes, this is the differentiation. Yes, we expect the STEM students to have stronger skills in those areas.

Ms. Kelly: From a strategic planning perspective, do we need to tweak our curriculum at the Middle and High school level to accommodate this STEM program?

Ms. Gormley: Yes, and we will.

Mr. Walker: This is a good idea. It may not be completely fleshed out, but if we get started, some of these things will work themselves out as we go. Let's get going.

Ms. Bagley Jones: What's the message? What's the uniqueness?

Ms. Padera: I see this as another option. It offers a different learning style, as well. French Immersion is more for auditory learners. STEM is more hands-on. This may help to ease some of the disparity between the two programs.

4. Happenings: Elementary teacher assignments will be sent at the end of August. Middle School teams will be sent on August 24th. "Welcome to Middle School Camp," will be held is August 20th -24th. On August 9th, there will be a "Meet the Principal" event at Pierce. Milton High freshman orientation will be held on August 27th. School begins on Monday, August 27th for teachers, and students arrive on

Wednesday. Preschool and Kindergarten begin on Tuesday, Sept. 4th. The administration had its presentation on First Grade Assignments. There is now an area on the website where FAQs can be accessed. Parents/Guardians can submit questions.

5. First Grade Presentation Update. Ms. Kelly asked if there is more information being gathered for the First Grade Assignment issue. Ms. Gormley replied that they are currently preparing the demographic information for the current first grade, which does not include summer registrations. She will post it to the web by the end of August. In addition, they are working on getting information on in which grades students leave French Immersion.

Ms. Kelley asked to see the demographics of the entire elementary school population, to see what has happened over the years.

Ms. Bagley Jones asked if they were going to look at the numbers in middle and high school, as well. Ms. Gormley said yes. She then asked if we could look into when and why students leave French Immersion, and look at retention rates going forward. What other schools in the US have immersion programs? How do they run them? Ms. Gormley said that Ms. Fisher is looking into this. Ms. Bagley Jones mentioned the need for social integration between the French and English programs, beginning in Grade One. Mr. Phelan said they have been discussing this at principals' meetings and it would likely be a lunch/recess program. Ms. Bagley Jones said we can do a better job at this.

### **Chairman's Report:**

Mr. Pavlicek distributed a copy of school calendar, with a notation that the retreat meeting will have discussion of district goals, etc. They will need to prepare an agenda for that. The retreat meeting is scheduled for August 15th and will not be televised. In addition, there are some slight revisions to the Subcommittee calendar. Mr. Walker was named the Consolidated Facilities liaison, when it should be Mr. Pavlicek. Ms. Padera should be the MFE rep, and also should join Ms. Bagley Jones on the Wellness Committee. Ms. Padera can take over the payroll issue. Ms. Kelly asked if Mr. Pattison is representing the Milton Public Schools on the MPEG committee. Ms. Gormley said she would approach a Milton High teacher to see if they would represent the school, but a School Committee member is also needed.

Mr. Pavlicek asked Mr. Walker for an update on the School Committee Orientation Packet. Mr. Walker said Ms. Padera now has a complete copy of the budget, information on the Open Meeting Law. She still needs copies of critical policies and an organizational chart. Ms. Kelly asked if the committee could have this available prior to School Committee elections so that people know what to expect. Mr. Walker said he plans to prepare two packets -- one for potential candidates and one for newly-elected candidates.

Regarding the RFQ for labor attorney, the Chairman noted that periodically, it's good practice to evaluate our choice for labor attorney. To that end, Mr. Walker drafted an RFQ so that interested folks could meet with the School Committee to give us their ideas for this position. Mr. Walker said he has prepared a document and is ready to publish. Ms. Kelly asked whether the MASC might be asked to assist with writing the

RFQ. Mr. Walker said he would be happy to have the attorney take a quick look at this, but other than some quick edits, it's time to execute. Ms. Kelly suggested that there be two different packets, one for qualifications, another for pricing. Mr. Walker will follow with MASC council. Ms. Sheridan asked, what will the process be once they have been collected all the interested submissions Do we interview them as a whole? Mr. Walker suggested a subcommittee be formed to screen RFQs for completeness and cull a list of finalists. Ms. Sheridan said she is personally very pleased with the work our attorneys have done. There was discussion about when to establish this subcommittee and Mr. Walker reminded them it can only be a maximum of three members. Ms. Sheridan wondered if this was common practice, to review counsel, and Ms. Kelly said this was done previously in Milton regarding SPED issues and is something that should be done periodically. Mr. Pavlicek said he would send an email to members to solicit interested parties for the subcommittee.

At the last meeting, it was announced that the School Committee had voted in executive session to raise the salary of non-union/clerical employees 2.25%, to reflect the raise given to teachers. Although it seems unclear whether or not it is necessary to announce this vote in open session, the chairman suggested the committee err on the side of being safe and entertained a motion to re-vote the raise.

Move: Mr. Walker

Second: Ms. Sheridan

Mr. Walker noted that the document he read explained that the issue was, in fact, clear.

Vote: 6-0-0

## **Policy Subcommittee**

Ms. Sheridan distributed copies of the MPS's current emergency plan policy. There is a recommendation to make certain changes, based on wording from MASC. On April 18th, the Governor signed Michael's Law, which requires that every school district have a written medical emergency plan. the MPS already has such a plan, but we are reformatting it to align with what they are recommending. The DESE is asking that we send them a copy by September 1st, 2012 and every three years thereafter. She asked committee members to review the plan and email her with edits. Ms. Gormley noted that Milton Academy has invited the Milton Public Schools to an emergency management in schools course. In addition, the Milton Police, Milton Fire, BIDMC-Milton will attend.

## **Old Business: Citizen Speak Topic Response:**

Ms. Jones noted that the committee should reiterate why we don't respond during meetings. The recent issues surrounding the French Immersion cap are such big issues, which require some solutions. She said she worries about the English teachers losing morale over this issue and asked community members to be sensitive with their criticisms. From a programmatic point of view, she noted that the continuous gathering of data is very important and said she would like to see a continuous World Language Committee. She also reiterated the importance of getting a SPED-certified teacher to

help with French Immersion children who have IEPs. She stressed her opposition to another immersion program and said the schools have done a good job on bullying.

Mr. Pavlicek said there was some recent talk about the International Baccalaureate program. He noted some issues that might be prohibitive for Milton, but said that it is an interesting program and he would continue to look into it.

Ms. Padera noted that, as an elementary parent, she is sensitive to the process of First Grade Assignment. She mentioned that people are losing sleep about not knowing, what the process will be and encouraged the committee to look at positive solutions.

**Next Meeting Agenda Items:**

Since the next meeting is the retreat, they agenda will include goals for the year, the Superintendent Evaluation tool and a vote on the emergency policy.

**Citizen Speak:** Carol Seidman, a Tucker parents, thanked the committee for its work. She encouraged the committee to consider children with disabilities. She mentioned some issues with bullying and worried about the demographics of the French and English programs.

The Chairman moved to adjourn to executive session to approve minutes.

Move: Ms. Kelly

Second: Ms. Sheridan

Roll Call Vote: Unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20.