

Minutes of the School Committee
Regular Meeting
Milton High Library
September 5, 2012

Committee Present: Glenn Pavlicek, Chair; Lynda-Lee Sheridan, Vice Chair; Mary Kelly, Becky Padera, Kristan Bagley Jones,

Not Present: Leroy Walker

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 September 5th, 2012 meeting of the School Committee to order at 7:07 pm

Approve Agenda: The Chairman moved to delete Items 7a (Fourth Quarter Report & Year End Summary) and 7b (MPS Proposal to Capital Committee) In addition, Item 4a (Approval of Minutes, August 28th) should be removed.

Citizens Speak

Mrs. Annie Davis came to talk about the program underway at Milton Public Library, "Milton Reads." The premise is that the entire town will read one book. This is based on the "One Book, One Town," program, which originated at the Library of Congress. The book is "To Kill A Mockingbird," and the program will run from September 15th to November 15th. There will be a kickoff event on September 15 at the MPL.

Approval of Minutes

a. Minutes of August 28, 2012, Full SC at Finance Subcommittee were not voted on.

Superintendent's Report

a. Back to School Update: Ms. Gormley asked to skip this item and return to it later in the agenda.

b. STEM - Grade One English Program (Attachment)

Holly Concannon, Elementary Math and K-8 Technology Coordinator, along with Marilyn Decker, K-13 Science Director, came to talk about STEM initiative in first grade English classes. The pair brought a few Lego "robots" to demonstrate some aspects of the STEM program.

Ms. Decker explained that STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics. its an important component of state and national science standards.

Ms. Concannon explained that a first-grade STEM classroom would feature open-ended problems, which require teamwork and creativity. For example, build a wall after reading "Three Little Pigs." Other examples would be exploring pulleys and gears, towers. Later, introduce motors, sensors, etc.

The Implementation Plan was described, which involved two days of PD for first grade teachers at Tufts University. In-district PD will be led by Ms. Concannon and Ms. Decker.

School Committee members asked questions about funding, scheduling, and why parents would opt for the STEM program. I was explained that STEM would take place during the regular school day and this was not an opt-in program, it is part of the regular science curriculum. Ms. Decker compared it to taking music lessons -- "it's a different way of seeing the world." Members asked about program outcome measures and whether STEM impacts MCAS scores. This will be explored. A member asked if this program could be started in Kindergarten, but Ms. Decker said the recommendation is for first grade.

c. Superintendent's Self-Assessment (Attachment)

At the School Committee summer retreat, members voted to use the new model for Superintendent Evaluation recommended by the DESE. This is School Committee Policy CBI. Ms. Gormley explained that she, Mr. Phelan and Mr. Gillis will attend a training in anticipation of DESE's new evaluation model.

As part of the self-assessment, Ms. Gormley submitted a self-reflection document, she outlined strengths and accomplishments. Mr. Pavlicek noted that every facet of evaluation occurs in open session, which is unusual. He also said that at the next meeting, members will give responses to Ms. Gormley's self-evaluation.

d. Milton Public Schools Handbooks

Assistant Superintendent John Phelan reminded parents and guardians that handbooks have been prepared for each school. He also urged parents to fill out and return the emergency cards that were sent home.

Each handbook has a sign-off sheet at the back to ensure that parents are aware of them. In addition, handbooks can be accessed through the miltonps.org website.

Ms. Kelly asked if the handbooks were available in other languages and Mr. Phelan said that they are available in two other languages and can be translated into other languages with online software.

e. Full Day Kindergarten/Enrollment Report

Ms. Gormley referred to an enrollment chart for Full Day Kindergarten, half-day kindergarten, French Immersion and English/FLES. She said she will have the demographic data for all the elementary schools by September 19th. Mr. Pavlicek noted that some data pools may be too small to publish, as they might identify individual students.

Ms. Gormley noted that there was a packet in the green folders. The DOE requires every school district to have a policy for emergency protocols. This crisis manual in the green folders was put together with the help of Mr. Gillis, Ms. Gibbons and Mr. Traister.

In addition, the Lorden family at Tucker School donated software called "Be SAfe," which provides an ariel view of each of our six schools and identifies where each classroom is located.

a. (revisited) Back to School Update: Ms. Gormley said that the opening of the schools has gone very smoothly. She will include resumes for new teachers in the next SC packets. They are still interviewing finalists for the elementary language arts position. In addition, transportation has gone smoothly-- so far, 1080 students are registered for buses. Some spots still open. Milton Community Schools has 500 students signed up. ALP (Applied Music Program) lesson registration will be held next week. There will be a Collicot Closet Sale on September. 29th. The results of Site Council elections will be announced next week.

Chairman's Report

a. DESE Massachusetts Model System for Superintendent's Evaluation

(Attachment) Mr. Pavlicek explained that Ms. Sheridan has arranged for a speaker to come to the September 19th meeting to discuss the superintendent evaluation process. The speaker will give a presentation on the process of evaluation.

b. Appoint MASC Delegate (VOTE) There is an upcoming MASC meeting in Hyannis. The Chairman entertained a motion to appoint a representative from the School Committee. Ms. Padera was nominated as the representative.

Move: Ms. Sheridan

Second: Ms. Bagley Jones

Vote: 5-0

c. Strategic Plan (Attachments) The cost of hiring consultant to assist with the strategic plan could be up to \$150,000. The chairman noted this is not a trivial expenditure. They are still working to identify a source of funding. Ms. Kelly emphasized the importance of drafting a strategic plan. She said the committee should find a funding source and also begin to look at individuals who could help, pro bono.

d. First Grade Assignment Policy

The chairman noted that the committee needs to come to an agreement sooner or later regarding the cap. The superintendent has recommended a cap, but there is no official proposal for how to execute it.

Ms. Kelly said she's not sure there is a consensus of the committee to agree to a cap. Some of the issues include how many first grades will there be? How many students in each school? Ms. Sheridan noted that the committee should not go into too much detail because Mr. Walker was not present. Ms. Bagley Jones asked the superintendent for her expert opinion and she offered to come up with 1, 2 or 3 proposals with pros and cons. Mr. Phelan said he thought the administration had already made a recommendation and that it was to cap. Ms. Kelly said that she believes not everyone understood that was the administration's recommendation. She asked if they could restate it. Ms. Padera said she would like more specifics. What would the percentages

look like? It was agreed that the administration would outline details on how a cap would work.

e. IB Update: The Chairman said he has been talking to some people about looking into this. They are still investigating possibilities.

Ms. Gormley informed the chairman, that regarding the Jewish holidays, different districts have different holidays and they are voted on by the School Committee. She recently realized that a meeting scheduled for September 18th would interfere with the Jewish holiday of Rosh Hashanah and asked if Mr. Pavlcek could reschedule.

Finance Subcommittee Report

a. 4th Quarter Report and Year End Summary (Attachment) (removed)

b. MPS Proposal to Capital Committee (Attachment) (removed)

Old Business

a. Citizen's Speak Topic Response (none)

Next Meeting Agenda Items: Add First Grade Assignment Policy, Add Superintendent Goals, Add Capping Presentation, including a timeline. Add High School Collaborative Time Subcommittee.

Citizens Speak (second session)

Nathan Sitkoff of Grove Street, had a son start Kindergarten at Tucker yesterday. He wanted to express disappointment in the offering of the STEM program. He described it as a substitute for science curriculum, not an enhancement.

The Chair entertained a motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of approval of minutes and discussing contract negotiations for the Consolidated Facilities Director -- and to adjourn directly from Executive Session and not return to Open Session.

Move: Ms. Sheridan

Second: Ms. Kelly

Vote: 5-0

The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 pm.
