

Minutes of the Milton School Committee  
Milton High School Library  
Regular Meeting  
October 12, 2011

**Committee Present:** Glenn Pavlicek, Chair; Denis Keohane, Vice Chair; Lynda-Lee Sheridan, Mary Kelly, Leroy Walker

**Not Present:** Kristan Bagley-Jones

**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 October 12, 2011 meeting of the School Committee to order at 7:09 P.M.

### **Approve Agenda**

The Chair added an item—contract negotiations with the MEA—to the Executive Session section of the agenda, after which the committee approved the Agenda for the October 12, 2011 meeting.

### **Approval of Minutes**

The Chair entertained a motion to approve the September 14, 2011 minutes of the School Committee. Ms. Sheridan proposed a friendly amendment changing some of the wording in the description of the Milton 350th Celebration activities.

Move: Keohane

Second: Sheridan

Vote: 5-0-0

The Chair entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the October 3, 2011 meeting of the Finance Subcommittee where a quorum of School Committee members was present. Approval of the minutes was deferred for a later vote.

### **Citizen Speak**

The President and Vice President of the Tucker School PTO and the Tucker School Principal reported to the committee that they had purchased seven Smartboards with funds the PTO had invested in a money market fund for future use. The Tucker is now the first school in the MPS which is 100% outfitted with this technology.

### **Superintendent's Update**

#### Advanced Placement Data Presentation

The Superintendent invited representatives from the leadership team at Milton High School to report on the results of the Advanced Placement program. The group included:

- Dr. Joseph Arangio, Principal
- Yolanda Beech, Vice Principal

- Alan Cron, Vice Principal
- Barbara Wright, Humanities Department Head
- Michelle Kreuzer, Math/Business/Technology Department Head
- Kenneth Aubert, Guidance Department Head

The presentation can be found online on the MPS Web site:

<http://www.miltonps.org/documents/AP.10-12-11.pdf>

Ms. Beech began the presentation by reviewing the advantages of having an Advanced Placement program which 1) builds confidence in students preparing for college, 2) increases students' depth of learning, 3) correlates with SAT score improvements, and 4) allows those who earn a qualifying score of three or higher to earn college credit.

Milton has seen a significant increase in participation in AP classes, which are open to all students who are motivated to try them. The guidance counselors and teachers encourage students to enroll in AP and present this possible option to students in middle school. For those students who cannot afford the AP exam fees, assistance is available through the Guidance Department. As a result of this inclusionary policy, the enrollment of students in AP courses in Milton outpaces the state.

As reported by Ms. Beech, of the 2011 participants in AP courses, 21% were students of color—a 46% increase in the number of students of color taking AP since 2001. Of the 54% of students earning qualifying scores (three or higher) last year, 23% were students of color. Mr. Aubert reported that a total of 73 AP students were designated as AP Scholars in 2011. English, Macroeconomics, and Biology represented the subjects most often subscribed to by MHS students. In English, 46 students took the AP level last year.

Ms. Wright spoke to the committee about professional development opportunities for MHS teachers to prepare them to teach the AP college-level curriculum. Training is available through the College Board, and there is online training as well. Many teachers participate in a Summer Institute in Vermont, funded by outside sources. The goal at MHS is to train all teachers in the AP curriculum. Currently, many teachers of AP classes offer morning, afterschool, and weekend extra help on their own time.

Ms. Kreuzer reported on efforts focused on developing students' math skills needed to succeed in the AP courses starting in ninth grade. Her team has created an integrated sequence and has revised the pre-calculus curriculum. The science curriculum is also under revision to reflect changes in the Biology exam. The success of the AP program is not only the result of improvements at MHS, but also of the strengthening of the curriculum at the elementary and middle schools.

Ms. Beech emphasized that even if a student does not earn a qualifying score on the AP exam, exposure to the advanced curriculum provides good preparation for the first year of college. According to Mr. Cron, MHS staff are working not only to increase the number of students in the AP program, but also to increase the number of qualifying scores. Ms. Gormley remarked that there is a high correlation between success in college and participation in AP courses. She stated that teachers are working above and beyond their

normal day to encourage students to participate and ensure that they can succeed in the rigorous program.

#### Diversity Report

Mr. Phelan reviewed the accomplishments of the MPS in the area of diversity for the 2010-2011 school year. The MPS has a clearly defined diversity policy, which requires an annual report due in mid-October. Mr. Phelan's report can be found online on the MPS Website:

[www.miltonps.org/documents/Diversityreport10-11.pdf](http://www.miltonps.org/documents/Diversityreport10-11.pdf)

As reported by Mr. Phelan, 18% of this year's new staff is non-white—the result of a recruitment process that focuses on attracting qualified minority candidates. The MPS administration meets monthly with the Citizen's for a Diverse Milton (CDM) and has established strong diversity committees in each school. The committees have developed programs to enhance understanding of cultural differences and to engage parents and students from all backgrounds.

District-wide meetings of the administration, the CDM, and school-based diversity committees occur twice a year in October and April to set goals and plan initiatives. The current white/non-white composition of the MPS student population is 70%/30%. The effort of the MPS to close the achievement gap between white and non-white students has made significant progress. For example, the Tucker School, with a make-up of 55% minority students, achieved the highest growth rate in the state in the recent round of MCAS testing. Mr. Walker requested a break out of the percentages of minority students in Special Education programs in the MPS.

Ms. Gormley emphasized that diversity of the population is one of the assets of the town of Milton and its public schools.

#### School Happenings

The Superintendent reported on recent and upcoming school and community events.

- FAVA (Friends and Advocates of the Visual Arts) has opened a new space for classes and events in the old East Milton Library building.
- MCAS results have been mailed to parents.
- October 18th is the annual Boosters "Swing for Sports" event.
- The Special Education PAC will host a meeting at 7:00 P.M. on October 20th at Pierce.
- The Flu Clinic will be held on October 27th.
- The MFE Monster Dash will be held on October 30th.
- The Library Gala fundraiser to support children's literature will be held on October 19th.
- The upcoming NEASC visit will provide opportunities for parent involvement.
- NEASC will meet with the School Committee on November 4th after a reception.
- The bus-related transportation issues have been resolved.

- Mr. Phelan will convene a committee to study changing school hours for next year.

### Annual Field Trip List

Mr. Phelan presented the members with a list of this year's field trips, which must be reviewed and approved per School Committee policy. Generally there are eight trips planned for the world language program, sports events, and social studies programs. This year, there are five trips planned. Ms. Kelly recommended that the list include more detail about pricing and the overnight and travel components. Mr. Phelan responded that the original intent of this preliminary list was to inform parents and institutionalize the annual approval process. He explained that the details of each trip would be reviewed separately. Ms. Sheridan emphasized the need to get trip information to parents as soon as possible for planning purposes. Mr. Phelan responded that after School Committee approval, the trips would be advertised within the schools through newsletters and email blasts.

After the discussion, Mr. Walker moved to approve the field trips represented on the list "in principle" and to have separate votes on each individual field trip proposal. And further, the School Committee directed the Administration to find a vehicle to share the detailed trip information with parents

Move: Walker

Second: Sheridan

Vote: 5-0-0

Mr. Pavlicek entertained a motion to approve the proposal for the Paris and Barcelona Educational Trip presented to the committee. Ms. Kelly expressed some concern about the transportation standards and the selected vendor. Mr. Phelan responded that the vendor, Casterbridge Tours, has been used by MPS in the past and is reputable. He also pointed out that no other schools would be involved in the Milton trip. The trip is open to students in the French and Spanish World Language programs. A day-to-day itinerary is available.

Move: Sheridan

Second: Keohane

Vote: 4-1-0 (Kelly opposed)

### **Chairman's Report**

At Mr. Pavlicek's request, the membership of the Policy Subcommittee was clarified. Members of this subcommittee will be Mr. Walker, Mr. Keohane, and Ms. Sheridan.

The committee agreed to defer the Superintendent's Evaluation until the next meeting when the full body would be present.

### **Finance Subcommittee Report**

Ms. Kelly presented the FY11 End-of-Year Report to the committee. She made a motion to authorize the Chair to sign this report on behalf of the School Committee, after which it would be posted online.

Move: Kelly

Second: Walker

Vote: 5-0-0

Ms. Kelly reported that the budget calendar has shifted to meet deadlines of the budget process for the Warrant Committee, which has requested a level-service versus a level-dollar budget, as well as a budget that reflects negative 1% growth in revenue.

As there was no further business to discuss, the Chair entertained a motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations with the MEA and to adjourn directly from Executive Session and not to return to Open Session.

Move: Walker

Second: Keohane

By a roll call vote, the School Committee voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations and to adjourn directly from Executive Session and not to return to Open Session.

The meeting ended at 8:50 P.M.