

Minutes of the Milton School Committee
Milton High School Library
Regular Meeting
October 6, 2011

Committee Present: Glenn Pavlicek, Chair; Denis Keohane, Vice Chair; Lynda-Lee Sheridan, Mary Kelly, Kristan Bagley-Jones, 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 October 6, 2011 meeting of the School Committee to order at 7:02 P.M.

Approve Agenda

After the following changes, the committee approved the Agenda for the October 6, 2011 meeting.

- Executive Session, scheduled for 6:30 P.M., was moved to the end of the regular meeting for the purpose of contract negotiations
- Deferral of the Facilities Subcommittee Report to a later meeting
- Deferral of the Policy Subcommittee Report to a later meeting
- Clarification that item 9 b. would require a vote of the School Committee to accept the FY11 Fourth Quarter Summary Report

Citizen Speak

Kara Russo came before the committee to encourage participation in the annual Milton High School Boosters “Swing for Sports” fundraising event on October 18th. She thanked Curry College and the Wollaston Golf Club for sponsoring the effort to bring together parents of high school athletes and community members for a memorable day of golf and tennis. More information about Booster activities can be found online.

<http://www.miltonboosters.com/>

Denise Queally and Patti Elliott, Co-Chairs of the Milton Foundation for Education annual “Monster Dash” fundraiser, encouraged the community to join the activities scheduled for October 30th. This annual event, in memory of former Tucker student Sam Cichello, supports science at the elementary level. The MFE speakers thanked Ms. Gormley and Marilyn Decker for their support. More information about this and other MFE events can be found online.

<http://www.miltonfoundationforeducation.org/>

Approval of Minutes

The chair entertained a motion to approve the July 22, 2011 minutes of the Finance Subcommittee Meeting where a full School Committee quorum was present. Ms. Kelly noted that the minutes of the subcommittee were in a format different from that of the regular

meeting minutes. Mr. Walker made a friendly amendment to item 3 a. adding a second sentence, *“The intention of the administration was to find an additional 0.5 FTE.”*

Move: Kelly

Second: Walker

Vote: 4-0-1(Sheridan abstained; Bagley-Jones absent for vote)

The Chair entertained a motion to approve the August 30, 2011 minutes of the Finance Subcommittee Meeting where a full School Committee quorum was present.

Move: Walker

Second: Kelly

Vote: 5-0-0 (Bagley-Jones absent for vote)

The Chair entertained a motion to approve the September 9, 2011 minutes of the Finance Subcommittee Meeting where a full School Committee quorum was present.

Move: Keohane

Second: Kelly

Vote: 4-0-1(Sheridan abstained; Bagley-Jones absent for vote)

Superintendent’s Report

Quincy Arts Festival

The Superintendent introduced Pierce Middle School Art teachers Robyn Thompson and Stephanie Sherman, who competed and won first and third places respectively in the Quincy Arts Festival. Ms. Gormley also announced that both teachers would be presenting at the National Art Association Convention in Seattle in March, which is an honor for the MPS. She went on to report that these teachers have been attending conferences at their own expense. Both teachers thanked the committee for the Smartboards, which allow them to show paintings in an enhanced format to the students.

MCAS Update

Mr. Phelan, Assistant Superintendent, and Martha Sherman, Elementary Language Arts, Social Studies, and Title 1 Coordinator, reported on the recent MCAS results for the MPS. The results show great progress in every school. Milton is moving in the right direction toward the goal of having all students reach proficiency or better by 2014. The majority of schools have achieved the highest improvement ratings of “No Status” and “On Target,” as has the district as a whole. The presentation can be found online on the MPS Web site:

<http://www.miltonps.org/documents/MCAS10-6-11.pdf>

Although there has been significant improvement overall, some subgroups require more focused attention. Schools receive the “No Status” rating after the aggregate of students and all subgroups pass two years in a row. Subgroups include students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency, economically disadvantaged students, and racial and ethnic groups. In response to a question from Ms. Kelly, Mr. Phelan stated that a critical mass of 30 students comprised a subgroup within a school. Three elementary schools, Glover, Tucker, and Collicot, received state commendations, and Cunningham also showed significant improvement. The Pierce, also on target, is focused on improving the performance in some subgroups. MHS as a whole also posted solid scores. Mr. Walker requested more detail about

the performance of the subgroups at Pierce. Ms. Gormley stated the administration would obtain the data from Mr. Jette. She went on to state that the staff reviewed every student's individual scores and that professional development was targeted to improvement in MCAS performance.

Ms. Sherman updated the committee on the work being done to incorporate the new state frameworks into the curriculum at each school. Grade-level facilitators and curriculum teams plan to have the information online for parents by the end of the year. She reported that there would be some dramatic changes in writing, which is a focus of professional development. Ms. Kelly requested more detailed information about the changes in the writing program

Ms. Sherman reviewed the Growth Model, which is another measure of student progress, tracking achievement by cohorts of students who perform in the same range on the MCAS tests. She stated that these cohorts could change from year to year. The growth percentages of each cohort are averaged by school and by district. She noted that on the DESE website, the Tucker School has shown some of the highest growth in the state.

Mr. Phelan finalized the presentation by thanking the students, parents, and teachers for the sustained growth of student achievement over the last two years. He stated that the MCAS results provided a thorough documentation of performance for parents and encouraged parents to contact teachers if they had questions. The principals plan to present the MCAS results to their respective PTO's. Ms. Kelly requested that the MCAS data charts be posted online, particularly those which show in bar graph form the changes at each school from year to year.

Ms. Bagley-Jones requested that the administration prepare a one-page summary of the results in the four measures of student success, which include:

- Student involvement in activities and athletics
- Academic Achievement
 - SAT
 - Advanced Placement
 - MCAS
- Graduation Rate
- College Acceptance

Ms. Kelly requested a summary of progress in the sciences and an update on the development of district-wide curriculum assessments. Mr. Phelan reported that 10 math unit assessments had been completed and that the Gates-MacGinitie assessments were being reintroduced through sixth grade for ELA. Ms. Kelly emphasized that development of assessments should be a priority at Pierce. Mr. Walker requested an analysis of students who have spent their entire academic careers in the Milton Public Schools and those who have entered at different points and the impact on MCAS performance.

Ms. Sheridan stated that the presentation demonstrated an outstanding level of growth in the MPS and thanked the administration and the community for the support essential to making this possible.

Superintendent's Self Reflection

As the first step in the process of the Superintendent's annual evaluation, Ms. Gormley presented a summary of her performance as it related to the goals and strategic plan set by the School Committee last year. She pointed to goals and objectives that had been met and those that had not yet been met. A detailed document had been sent to committee members prior to the meeting and will be posted online. Ms. Gormley commended the committee for developing the subcommittee model, which has worked well in improving internal communication and moving the system forward.

In her summary of the self-evaluation document, Ms. Gormley noted the:

- Positive results of the DESE Coordinated Program Review audit
- Improvements in MCAS, SAT, and AP test results
- Increased participation by minority students in the PSAT's and AP courses
- Impressive credentials of the newly hired administrators, who are content experts and leaders
- Successful budget process in collaboration with the Warrant Committee and town departments
- Math curriculum review and revision with the development of a three year implementation plan
- Ongoing curriculum development and assessment and alignment, which is on target
- MHS self-study submitted in anticipation of the NEASC visit in November
- New Consolidated Facilities Department that is off to a good start
- Initiation of a pathway from grades 6 to 12 to improve AP participation and results; increased teacher involvement in professional development to teach at the AP level
- Focus on the identification of at-risk students and the need to find funds outside of school sources for new mentoring models
- Co-taught classes and the direct relationship to achievements in the performance of special education students
- Strong qualifications of the newly hired staff
- Development of an effective evaluation tool in the teacher contract
- Cost savings in energy usage and transportation
- Need to continue to work with the town to create an integrated payroll and personnel system
- Need to procure more grant funding
- Need to provide opportunities for MPS students to be recognized at the local, state, and national levels

As a continuation of the effort to keep the School Committee fully informed, Ms. Gormley is hoping to implement a weekly report of significant events, which will also look ahead to the following week, to be sent to the School Committee members every Friday. She also informed the committee that the district-wide goals for 2011-2012 had been sent to the principals.

Mr. Pavlicek reminded School Committee members to prepare their thoughts and responses to the Superintendent's self-evaluation for the next meeting. Ms. Sheridan reported that the

Policy Subcommittee is waiting for the new version of the MASC superintendent evaluation guidelines due in January to craft a revised policy for Milton.

School Happenings

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

- The “Celebrate Milton” event held on October 4th was huge success and provided community service students with a great opportunity to participate.
- The program “Rachel’s Challenge,” presented as part of the anti-bullying initiative and paid for by outside funding, was positively received at both the middle and high schools.
- MHS was a recent host to 200 Japanese students in an annual exchange program.
- The “Swing for Sports” Booster’s fundraiser will be held on October 18th.
- The MFE-sponsored “Monster Dash” fundraiser will be held at Cunningham Park on October 30th.
- The Library Gala fundraiser is scheduled for October 19th.
- MHS Girl’s Volleyball Coach Robin Lee was inducted into the Coaches’ Hall of Fame.
- Pierce Middle School will be performing “Footloose” the first weekend in November; “Guys and Dolls” is planned for January.
- The Administration and School Committee will be hosting a reception for NEASC the 1st Sunday in November.
- MHS Student Representatives to the School Committee have been selected.
- MHS English students produced a moving newsletter about the events of 9/11.

Mr. Phelan reported that he is putting together a committee of parents, teachers, and administrators to study starting times for schools. The committee will review research and best practices for a recommendation to the School Committee. He also reported that the professional development day scheduled for October 7th would focus on 1) writing expectations of the common core at the elementary level, 2) a review of the common core at the middle school, and 3) use of common planning time at MHS.

Chairman’s Report

Mr. Pavlicek reported that the updated School Committee Calendar included sessions for budget preparation to meet the Warrant Committee deadline for submission. Ms. Kelly recommended that the committee be prepared to vote on provisional level service and level funded budgets November 30th. Ms. Sheridan recommended that the MFE presentation be moved to March, closer to their annual fundraising event, and sought clarification about the timing of the MASC resolutions vote.

Finance Subcommittee Report

Ms. Kelly reported that the Milton Foundation for Education had raised a total of \$60K in grants for the schools and requested that the Superintendent’s report to the MFE president, which outlines how the funds would be distributed and spent, be posted online. Mr. Pavlicek entertained a motion to accept the \$60K in funding from the Milton Foundation for Education.

Move: Sheridan

Second: Walker

Vote: 6-0-0

Ms. Kelly directed the committee members to a memo summarizing the Fourth Quarter FY11 Financials from the Assistant Superintendent for Business and moved to approve the financials as reported in the memo.

Move: Kelly

Second: Walker

Vote: 6-0-0

Ms. Kelly reported that the state grant for full-day kindergarten may not be available in FY13, which would necessitate an increase in tuition of \$800-\$900. Ms. Gormley encouraged the Finance Subcommittee to find opportunities to offset the increase. Ms. Bagley-Jones emphasized the need to be proactive in communicating the potential increase to parents by, for example, including language on the application stating that the tuition prices are subject to change.

Next Meeting Agenda Items

Ms. Kelly suggested the committee consider taking a position on the proposal to build 96 units of 40B housing on Randolph Ave. Members felt that they needed documentation and more information about the proposal before addressing potential issues.

Recommendations for future meeting topics included:

- The end-of-year report which will require a vote
- A possible preview of “Footloose”
- A discussion about library hours at MHS
- An update on transportation

The Chair then entertained a motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations with the custodial workers and to adjourn directly from Executive Session and not to return to Open Session.

Move: Walker

Second: Kelly

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 9:50 P.M.