

Minutes of the Milton School Committee
Regular Meeting
Milton High School Library
February 9, 2011

Committee Present: Lynda-Lee Sheridan, Chair; Glenn Pavlicek, Vice Chair; Chris Huban, Mary Kelly, Kristan Bagley-Jones, Denis Keohane, John Savino, Student Representative

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

Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

Citizen Speak

An enthusiastic group of involved/engaged students from Milton High School spoke to the committee about the importance of sports and clubs and to encourage participation in the Walkathon fundraiser on February 12th.

Superintendent's Report

Grade 6-12 Math Curriculum

Ms. Gormley introduced James Jette, Pierce Middle School Principal, Amy Gale, Curriculum Coordinator for grades 6-8, Michelle Kreuzer, Math/Technology/Business Department Head for grades 9-12, and Dr. John Drott, Milton High School Principal. The group presented a review of planned changes to the middle and high school math curriculum which will 1) provide more rigor to the overall math program, 2) address changes required by the core standards, and 3) align the coursework with the timing of MCAS and SAT testing. The presentation can be found on the home page MPS Web site's School Committee Corner:

<http://www.miltonps.org/documents/MathCurriculum6-12.pdf>

The new curriculum will expose students to algebra concepts every year in integrated course offerings, beginning with pre-algebra in grade 6. One of the goals of the plan is to have as many students as possible be prepared for pre-calculus by their junior year. The changes will be rolled out over a three-year period and include a provision for transfer students who may need support to catch up.

Costs of implementing the new curriculum are roughly \$40K for new textbooks and professional development. Ms. Gormley stated that funding for the texts and materials will come largely from the Hillside Funds, a source of monies set aside by the Copeland Foundation for Milton High School. Ms. Gormley and Mr. Phelan both commended the group for their hard work and collaboration to set a higher bar for Milton students.

In response to a question from Ms. Bagley-Jones, Ms. Kreuzer explained that this model for math instruction has a precedent and is followed in other school districts. Mr. Pavlicek, who participated in the planning process, stated that separation of algebra and geometry is unique to the U.S. Changing the curriculum to incorporate algebra throughout, will bring Milton in line with math instruction worldwide.

Ms. Gale stated that Pierce is already piloting a pre-algebra textbook in grade 6. Ms. Sheridan noted that technology enhancements are accompanying the changes in the math curriculum, which include Smart Boards and the use of graphing calculators as early as grade 8.

Dr. Drottter reiterated the importance of having algebra be a constant throughout the curriculum, which will help reinforce important concepts for students who are struggling. He is also working to create a support class for those students by reconfiguring and refining the resources for study skills at the high school.

Ms. Gormley reported that the principals and math leadership team are making plans to communicate these changes to parents. Ms. Sheridan thanked School Committee Vice Chair, Mr. Pavlicek, for his consultation and participation in developing the new curriculum.

Draft Proposal for the Milton High School Program of Studies

Milton High School Vice Principal Alan Cron presented proposed changes to the MHS Program of Studies. He reported that a thorough review of current course offerings and sequencing pointed to the need to clarify content changes and adjustments in course alignment.

Subsequent School Committee discussion focused on:

- World language requirements (currently 90% of students are taking 3-4 years of a foreign language de facto without a graduation requirement to do so)
- The community service requirement and the efforts underway to weave together education and community service offerings
- Plans to communicate the Program of Studies to eighth grade parents on March 17th with department heads available to answer parent questions
- The importance of electives in the high school schedule which 1) provide students with opportunities to try something different and 2) help meet the state requirement of 990 hours of engagement in instructional time per year
- Providing more electives in the sciences
- The importance of Advanced Placement courses, which give students the opportunity to hone in on their interests

Superintendent's Update

Ms. Gormley reported on the following:

- The successful resolution of a problem created by the Collicot/Cunningham fire alarm system
- The success of the first grade information nights held at each elementary school; packets for program choices were handed to parents, who can review the timeframe for returning the required information on the MPS Web site
- Details for Kindergarten Information Night, which will be held at MHS at 7:00 P.M. on February 10th
- Details for Grade 5 Information Night to be held on March 2nd at Pierce
- Progress in the searches to fill the positions for Principal of Collicot School and the Administrator of Pupil Personnel Service
- February vacation week will be the week of February 21st
- Commendation to MHS student Emily Regan for her work in organizing and publicizing the National Honor Society's coat drive
- Reminder to participate in the Walkathon to support MHS sports and clubs on February 12th
- Assistant District Attorney Dan Feeney will present a program about internet safety on February 17th

Mr. Phelan announced that a second Saturday enrichment program will be held at Pierce for grades 3-7 for six Saturdays in March from 8:30 – 11:30. He thanked the MFE for funding the program. Ms. Sheridan, who observed the program last year, stated that it was a wonderful resource.

Chairman's Report

Ms. Sheridan presented a revised School Committee calendar and reminded the committee about the joint meeting with the Warrant Committee on February 16th. She deferred Executive Session to a later meeting.

Finance Subcommittee Report

Ms. Kelly reported that the FY12 budget binders had been prepared for the Warrant Committee presentation. The administration will post all budget documents online and will have the information made available at the library, school offices, and Town Hall.

Consolidated Facilities Update

Ms. Sheridan reported that the interviews with the final three candidates for the Director of Facilities position will be conducted on February 14th. Ms. Gormley and Mr. Keohane will be representing the School Committee in this new town-wide initiative. The interviews and deliberations are open to the public and will be recorded by cable TV.

Policies Subcommittee Update

Mr. Huban presented the Facebook and Social Networking Websites policy to the committee for the second reading. Since the policy is directed toward school employees rather than students, Ms. Kelly recommended that the title of the policy be amended to include that information. Mr. Huban accepted the friendly amendment from Ms. Kelly.

A motion was made to approve the second reading of the Policy on Facebook and Social Networking Websites as amended.

Move: Huban

Second: Bagley-Jones

Vote: 6-0-0

After reviewing the policies on Procurement and Procurement Authority, and Bidding, the committee referred them to the Finance Subcommittee for further discussion. The committee sought further clarification on the scope of the licensing requirements of the Chief Procurement Officer.

Mr. Huban made a motion to approve the policy on Title 1 Comparability Procedures, which incorporated changes recommended by the committee, breaking out the policy section from the specific regulations.

Move: Huban

Second: Bagley-Jones

Vote: 6-0-0

Mr. Huban then presented a policy on Energy Efficient Vehicles to the committee for the first reading.

Old Business

Ms. Kelly requested that the current enrollment charts be posted online. Ms. Gormley reported that the administration had added information on current enrollment and enrollment history to the budget presentation.

Ms. Sheridan entertained a motion to adjourn the regular meeting of the School Committee.

Move: Huban

Second: Bagley-Jones

Vote: 6-0-0