

Minutes of the School Committee  
Regular Meeting  
Milton High Library  
Date: 10/1/14

**Committee Present:** Leroy Walker, Chair, Michael Zullas, Vice Chair, Mary Kelly, Lynda-Lee Sheridan, Becky Padera. Student Reps: Spencer Torres and Aubrey Erikson. (Kristan Bagley Jones arrived late)

**Staff Present:** Mary Gormley, Superintendent, Glenn Pavlicek, Assistant Superintendent for Business; and Janet Sheehan, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Human Resources.

### **Call to Order**

The Chair called the October 1, 2014 meeting of the School Committee to order at 7pm.

### **Approve Agenda**

The committee approved the agenda after removing items 6 b, c and e and also removing the Executive Session.

### **Citizens Speak**

Cole Kelly, an MPS parent, came to speak about the East Milton bus fees. He feels that students from East Milton are dealing with a safety issue. He compared Milton's fee to the town of Canton's fees and said that Milton's fees are too high.

### **Superintendent's Report**

Topic One: Director of Pupil Personnel Services Director Karen Clasby made a presentation to the committee entitled: Special Education - Strategies and National Best Practices for Closing the Achievement Gap. Ms. Clasby was invited to discuss strategies for closing the SPED proficiency gap. She discussed the book "New Directions in Special Education," and explained that there is a need for additional co-teaching sections at the middle school and the high school. One of the department's goals is inclusion, i.e., to increase the number of SPED students who spend a majority of time in regular education settings. She also stated that the Achievement Gap should steadily decrease as inclusion increases. To view the entire presentation, click here: <http://www.miltonps.org/documents/AddressingtheAchievementGap14.pdf>

\* note, Ms. Bagley Jones arrived at 7:20 pm \*\*\*

School Committee members asked Ms. Clasby questions after the presentation. Mr. Walker described it as "data rich," and would like a chance to have a follow-up discussion at the October 15th meeting. Ms. Padera asked if the State has a way of comparing the scores of students with different disabilities, and if not, is this something the MPS could do? Ms. Sheridan asked how interventions are analyzed for effectiveness and Ms. Clasby said that as a group and has a consistent response. Mr. Zullas asked what the cost might be for additional teachers in 2015-16. Ms. Kelly asked if the number of students in-district on IEPs and/or 504 has decreased. Ms. Clasby said, "we've done some work to clarify certain disabilities, so we can "weed out" some

students who are struggling, but not disabled.” Mr. Walker said that as the district becomes more sophisticated on executing on our advancement plans, we should have individual plans for any student in the Needs Improvement or Warning categories. Ms. Kelly asked if our new technology person is SPED certified. Ms. Gormley said she is not, but noted that she has sat down with Ms. Clasby they are working together. Ms. Kelly asked how are children with special needs distributed in classrooms. Ms. Bagley Jones asked to see data on the new inclusion models out there at the next presentation.

Topic Two: Student Achievement Data (Attachment) Milton High School Principal James Jette, Pierce Middle School Principal Dr. Karen Spaulding, Tucker Principal Dr. Elaine McNeil-Girmai, Glover Principal Dr. Sheila Kukstis, Cunningham Principal Jonathan Redden, Collicot Principal Holly Concannon and MHS Math, Technology and Business Department Head Courtney Miller came to give a presentation on Student Achievement Data. Ms. Gormley noted that in the past, each principal would present their own school's data, but now, it is presented for the district. To view the data presentation, click here: <http://www.miltonps.org/committee-presentations.php> and click on ‘2014 MPS School Based MCAS Presentation.’”

The presentation focused on the methods of data collection, how it is analyzed and how to apply the focus areas rooted in the data. The group presented aggregate data observations for each grade level, as well as subgroup data. It was noted that there is a significant gap between High Needs subgroup and non-High Needs subgroup in grades 3 in both ELA and Math, but those gaps begin to narrow by Grade 5. In addition, MPS elementary students performed better than the state average in all content areas. A list of initiatives was presented for the elementary level, which included reading specialists in French and English, specialized reading support and additional technology.

At the middle school level, both aggregate and subgroup data was selected. There are gaps between subgroups and their counterparts in all testing areas, with the largest gaps existing in the Math and STE groups. It was noted that 88% of all students at PMS were proficient or advanced in ELA and 48% of 6th graders scored Advanced in Math. Focus areas include targeted support for students in the High Needs subgroup, and the goal to move students in the the Advanced categories in ELA, Math, and STE. Initiatives at the middle school level include technology enhancement, assessment and improving instruction.

For Milton High School, the aggregate data shows that there is an increase in the number of students scoring Advanced/Proficient by at least 10% from grades 8 to 10 in ELA and Math, while percentages nearly double for science. In addition, 96% of students are scoring Advanced or Proficient on the Grade 10 ELA exam, and there were no failures on the Grade 10 Math exam. The subgroup data showed an achievement gap in English Language Arts, Math and STE, with the biggest gap in ELA for the Special Ed subgroup. Focus areas include the review and revision of science curriculum and instruction and enhanced support for students identified as being at-risk of testing below peers.

School Committee members commended the group for their work on this presentation. Mr. Zullas asked, what does the data tell us with respect to the advancement initiatives? Dr. McNeil-Girmai said that in order to close the proficiency gaps, we need to continue to work in these areas. There has been progress in Science, but for Early Literacy, it's too early to see where that work will take us. Dr. Spaulding talked about the district need for a Materials Manager in order to keep track of the materials that have come in. She also said that targeted intervention

and targeted support make a difference. Ms. Concannon talked about how effective the Reading Specialists have been. Mr. Walker asked the group to think about a few issues -- how does a student who receives support at the elementary level fare when they move to middle or high school? Also, can the district now quickly assess which strategies work and which do not? He also asked if we could find the answer to why students in the French Immersion program tend to perform better on MCAS. Ms. Kelly asked about the number of Reading Specialists currently available and what grade levels. She wanted to know if we could "break out" the data on those students who have been in the district vs. new students. Ms. Bagley Jones said she liked getting all the MCAS data from all levels in one presentation. Ms. Miller explained how PPI works, and explained that when you are looking at the number for the district, it's not the same as the average for each school. She explained how MHS went from Level 1 to Level 2 and said that some of the reason was because high school student participation in the MCAS dropped as a percentile.

Topic Three: Bus Fee Analysis and 2015-16 Fee Recommendation (Attachment) (Vote) Dr. Pavlicek explained that state law mandates that we transport for free all students K-6 who lives 2 miles or more from their school. Until 2007, we transported all those who lived 1.5 miles or more from school, but in 2007, for budgetary reasons, we changed this to 2 miles. He explained the reasons for the origination of the East Milton "shuttle," and how that route has changed over the years and is now a regular bus route. Ms. Gormley recommended equalizing all the rates across town. Ms. Padera said she thinks Milton's bus fees are somewhat high and we should look at making the rate lower. She thinks we should make riding the bus a more reasonable option, by lowering the cap and possibly lowering the fee. Ms. Sheridan said she agrees that the fee is high. She also agreed that the fees have to be equitable. She noted that other parts of town have safety issues. Ms. Kelly noted that every dollar spent on buses is money NOT spent on education and she said that balancing French/English classrooms adds to the amount of students being bused. Ms. Bagley Jones asked how much it costs for each bus and Dr. Pavlicek said each bus is approximately \$65,000 per year and the district runs 10 buses for a total of \$650,000. There was discussion about upcoming construction in East Milton Square and whether that will impact buses and/or crossing guards. Mr. Zullas moved to accept the recommendation of the administration that we have a uniform rate for bus fees across town, but no dollar figure yet.

Move: Mr. Zullas

Second: Ms. Sheridan

Discussion: Ms. Bagley Jones said there are three issues -- the rate, the uniformity and the crossing guards. How do we get them in place?

Vote: 1-4-1 (1 yes, 4 no, 1 abstain - Ms. Bagley Jones)

Mr. Walker suggested the committee revisit this issue on Oct. 15th, with more detail on bus fees and family cap. Ms. Sheridan asked, if there is discussion at Finance Subcommittee, please report back as much information as possible by making minutes available as soon as possible.

**Happenings:** Ms. Gormley noted that Milton High recently hosted the largest in-school exchange in the US. 250 high school students from Japan visited the high school today. She also noted that she will be holding a second annual book donation drive to get books into the homes of families who do not have home libraries. National Walk to School Day is Oct 8th, and

Exercise for Evan will be held on October 12th. Other upcoming events include Swing for Sports, the Monster Dash and Town Meeting.

Ms. Gormley then made a Public Statement in order to update the public on a criminal incident regarding former Guidance Department Head Ken Aubert. Ms. Gormley noted that Mr. Aubert has been charged with five counts of larceny of MPS funds from 2009-2013.

### **Chairman's Report**

Topic One: Appoint MASC Delegate (Attachment) (Vote) Ms. Padera has been nominated. The chairman entertained a motion to appoint Ms. Padera as the delegate to MASC.

Move: Mr. Walker

Second: Mr. Zullas

Vote: 6-0-0

Topic Two: School Committee District Goals (Attachment)

Mr. Walker went through the goals which were developed during the School Committee retreat. Members suggested edits to several of the goals.

**Goal #1: Develop a rolling three-year financial/academic operations/capital plan by FY16**

**Goal #2: Develop and Execute a Digital Technology Strategy for Academic Achievement for Grades K-5 by FY 16.**

Ms. Sheridan asked if Dr. Burke does a needs-assessment to determine which grade level is the neediest. She said she was unsure that "K-5" would be comprehensive enough. Ms. Kelly suggested the goal read "...academic achievement for the Milton Public Schools," instead.

**Goal #3: Narrow Academic Proficiency and Participation Gaps including by Subgroups and by French-English Programs by Year End FY17.**

Ms. Kelly does not think this is specific enough or measurable enough. Mr. Walker suggested they split it into two goals. There was some discussion about the date of FY17. Mr. Walker said he would assume this goal is "aspirational," since there is a continually moving target. He said we need to say we want to see every student growing and improving. Ms. Sheridan said we should add what measurement tool is used. Ms. Bagley Jones said she'd like to see Growth Model in there. Ms. Kelly wants to stay away from PPI.

**Goal #4: Develop and Execute Mathematics and Science Internal Assessment Capabilities and Achievement Action Plans Using the ELA Internal Assessment Model by Year-End FY15.**

There was discussion about the date. The committee agreed to change the goal to read "Calendar Year 15" instead of "Year-End 14" Also, strike the word "Capabilities."

**Goal #5: Develop & Execute a Comprehensive Plan for All Students in Grades 6-12 to Monitor, Assess and Support the Social/Emotional Well Being and Life Skill Preparation by Year-End FY15.**

Ms. Bagley Jones wants to remove the word "execute" from this goal. Ms. Padera would like to change the grades to K-12. She also thinks that "life skills" should not be part of this. Should this be a different goal? Mr. Walker thinks all three things should be there. The following wording was agreed upon:

*"Develop a comprehensive plan for grades K-12 to educate assess and support the health, social/emotional well being and life skill prep for all students by year end FY15."*

**Goal #6 Develop and Execute Elementary School Marketing Plans that document program offerings, communicate academic success and generate/sustain demand by year-end CY15.**

Ms. Bagley Jones objected to the word ""marketing" -- but withdrew her objections .

Ms. Kelly asked where the special ed review would fall within the goals. We need to recognize that this is something we would do. She asked if it should include "objective to complete a program review for SPED by year end FY15." The chair made a motion to accept the goals as amended.

Move: Ms. Sheridan  
Second: Ms. Padera  
Vote: 6-0-0

Ms. Kelly asked what are next steps and Mr. Walker said he would come back with a version that reflects tonight's discussion.

**Finance Subcommittee Report**

Topic One: Approval of Vendor Warrants

Mr. Pavlicek noted that Warrant Number 11 was before them, from September 11th in the amount of \$226,310.88. The chair entertained a motion to approve.

Move: Ms. Kelly  
Second: Mr. Zullas  
Vote: 5-0-1 (Ms. Kelly abstained)

Next, he presented Vendor #13 Sept 25th) in the amount of \$452,105.58

Move: Ms. Kelly  
Second: Mr. Zullas  
Vote: 4-0-2 (Mr. Walker & Ms. Kelly abstained)

Next, he presented Vendor Warrant #14 (Oct 2nd) in the amount of \$205,759.30

Move: Ms. Kelly  
Second: Mr. Zullas  
Vote: 4-0-2 (Mr. Walker & Ms. Kelly abstained)

Topic Two: FY15 Budget Calendar (Attachment)

### **Next Meeting Agenda Items**

Mr. Walker added follow-up presentations on the MCAS and SPED presentations. Ms. Sheridan asked to introduce the new Technology Administrator Dr. Angela Burke and the new Parent Liaison Marti McKena.

The Chair entertained a motion to adjourn.

Move: Mr. Walker  
Second: Ms. Sheridan  
Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0

The meeting adjourned at 10:41 pm

