

Minutes of the School Committee
Regular Meeting
Milton High Library
November 5, 2014

Committee Present: Leroy Walker, Chair; Michael Zullas, Vice Chair; members Lynda-Lee Sheridan, Mary Kelly, Kristan Bagley-Jones.

Not present: Ms. Padera

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

Student Reps: Matt McCarthy and Spencer Torres.

Call to Order: The Chair called the November 5th meeting of the School Committee to order at 7:08pm

Approve Agenda: The committee approved the agenda after removing the minutes. The chairman deferred the Item 5d (FY16 fee schedule discussion) and removed Item 7d (FY16 Advancement Budget Update.) It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on 11/10, not 11/12.

Citizens Speak

Michelle Connolly, the newly elected president of the Milton Special Education Parent's Advisory Council (SEPAC), came to introduce herself and asked the School Committee if they would consider creating a subcommittee on SPED.

Superintendent's Report

Topic One: Introduction of Marti O'Keefe McKenna, the district's new Parent Liaison. Ms. McKenna described her new position and what she has been doing to familiarize herself with the district and the needs of families. Ms. Bagley Jones asked if Ms. McKenna would write a letter of introduction to all new families. She also asked her to meet with members of the SEPAC and to familiarize herself with Health & Wellness Committee. Matt McCarthy asked if she could connect new students with some of the existing programs, for example, a "Welcome Wagon," type approach to new families.

Topic Two: Pierce Middle School Site Council Presentation (Attachment) Principal Dr. Karen Spaulding; teachers James Moonan, Sarah Pullia and Jeff Stoodt; parent/guardians Amy Flanagan, Lisa Viola, Gillian Najarian and Marc Check, all members of the Pierce Site Council, came to give the presentation. Dr. Spaulding began by introducing the council and explaining the process. Mr. Moonan outlined some of the MCAS results. There was a discussion on programming and the interventions,

with Dr. Spaulding explaining how targeted reading intervention works. She described the concept behind Pierce Academy and its effectiveness for 7th and 8th grade. Mr. Stoodt talked about the Outdoor Classroom. Ms. Bagley Jones asked whether the iSTEM courses are still offered by invitation only. Dr. Spaulding explained that students must fill out an application for the 8th grade course. For seventh grade course, selection is based on MCAS, but students still need to write an essay on why they want to take it. Ideally, Dr. Spaulding said she would like to offer to all. Ms. Bagley Jones asked, how does this affect our subgroups? Do kids who can't write get eliminated from this, even if they're hands-on? Mr. Zullas asked about what types of wildlife are seen in the outdoor classroom and Mr. Stoodt explained that he meant mostly birds. Ms. Bagley Jones was happy to hear about the data on those students who may not participate in after school activities. Ms. Viola talked about next steps, and the School Improvement Plan. Mr. Zullas asked about the science textbooks being outdated and wanted to know if they were replaced. He was told they have been, thanks to Advancement 1.0. Ms. Sheridan asked how often the site council meets and was told once a month, plus "sprinkle in" additional meetings. Ms. Sheridan also asked about the grants that Dr. Spaulding is writing and noted that these take time and talent. Ms. Kelly asked what it would take for all students to take STEM courses. Dr. Spaulding said the vision would be that every student who wants to take the STEM elective would have the opportunity. This would require restructuring one of the computer class offerings. Mr. Walker complimented the site council on their work.

Topic Three: K-12 Science and STEM Presentation (Attachment) Bernadette Moonan, Elementary Science Coordinator, Christine Chiappetta, Middle School Science Curriculum Coordinator, Amy Tom, Milton High School Science Department Head, John Diamond, MHS teacher and Robotics Coach, all came to help with the presentation. Ms. Gormley thanked them for becoming a team. Ms. Moonan talked about the progress so far and explained about the use of code.org, for which she will be attending a PD in December. Ms. Chiappetta talked about the after-school offerings via PASS classes and about the LEGO Mindstorms. She noted that participation in the Science Fair is a mandatory requirement for students in iSTEM. The group talked about increasing opportunities for STEM electives and said they would like to pilot an expanded STEM curriculum next year. Looking at "Project Lead the Way," based at WPI. They are hoping to offer their first-level engineering type course to all students. Ms. Gormley recognized Ms. Chiappetta and Dr. Spaulding for their work on this. The group described a field trip to the Cape Cod Canal, and the engineering aspect of this. Ms. Bagley Jones asked if the language could be changed for these iSTEM courses and said she is disappointed that it's only for the kids who are already doing very well. She worries that kids who are "flying under the radar," won't get the opportunity and noted that the advancement budget is focused on subgroups' performance, so this should be more connected. The group moved on to describe Biograph, a computer simulation program. This is another way to bring STEM into biology classroom. Ms. Moonan talked about the FOSS program's professional development and how popular they are. She talked about how all 5th grade classrooms are now participating in Science from Scientists. Ms. Gormley mentioned the collaboration with the Milton Foundation for Education. Ms. Moonan called it "wildly successful." Ms. Chiappetta said last year was a

huge success. Ms. Tom pointed out that Mr. Diamond ran a summer program here at MHS, which was a successful fundraiser for the Robotics Team. Glover School just started a First Lego League. Ms. Sheridan asked about "Project Lead the Way" -- what is the cost? Ms. Moonan said that each level (elementary, middle, HS) has a cost, and she would approximate that it is about \$50,000. She noted that there is a big up-front cost. Ms. Sheridan asked, can students take multiple science classes? Ms. Tom said that Biology and Chemistry are required for the upper-level courses. Ms. Bagley Jones asked about the bio-tech lab -- is it available to all students? Ms. Tom said that it is available to all. Ms. Kelly commented that we've leaped ahead in a short period of time. Said it's great that Science Fairs are back, but she would like to see students creating science fair projects as part of science class, not as an extracurricular. Mr. Zullas asked about the materials manager position. Ms. Moonan said she spends a lot of time addressing teacher needs, including "re-stocking the kits" and getting them from building to building. Mr. Zullas also asked about the 3D printer. There is one currently at the math department and it is an exciting piece of technology. Ms. Gormley talked about how much science has improved. She talked about how "enhancements" come from fundraising and how time consuming that is.

Happenings: Legally Blonde. School Committee on Monday night. Tuesday is no school. Conferences upcoming. Also, bringing back on Nov 24th at 6:30 the "Chemical Awareness" presentation.

Chairman's Report

Topic One: Transportation and Traffic Safety Subcommittee (Attachment) (Vote). This arose from a need to have a means to discuss transportation and traffic safety subcommittee. Mr. Walker recommended that this be formed to review and serve as a conduit. The charge would be to coordinate solutions. Mr. Walker entertained a motion to approve the new subcommittee.

Move: Ms. Sheridan

Second: Ms. Kelly

Discussion: Mr. Zullas noted that a group of parents have driven this discussion and thanked them for their time. Ms. Kelly made a friendly amendment to add a Pierce Middle School parent to the committee, which was accepted.

Vote: 5-0-0

Topic Two: Superintendent's Evaluation (Attachment) (Vote) Mr. Walker said he worked with the superintendent on this document. Ms. Bagley Jones wants to know if School Committee members can add more to this as we go, or is this the final document? Mr. Walker said this is final, but we can add comments. Ms. Bagley Jones asked how the ratings were done. He said they are "averages." At this point, Mr. Walker went through the evaluation point by point. To view the entire document, visit this site:

<http://www.miltonps.org/documents/MPSEndCycle-SumEvalReport-Superintendent13-14FFfromSchoolCommittee.pdf>

Mr. Walker mentioned Early Literacy initiatives, Pathways/STEM, Communications and noted that the Superintendent sets high standards. Ms. Sheridan said she thinks the Superintendent should have been rated in the Exemplary category, and added that when Ms. Gormley sees a need in the district, she does research on the issue to provide backup data and make a research-based decision. Also, Ms. Sheridan noted that Ms. Gormley "is committed and well known throughout the school and town community." Ms. Sheridan would like to add that the comment that Ms. Gormley is a collaborator. Under the "works effectively" paragraphs, she has surrounded herself with a talented leadership team.

Ms. Bagley Jones said her comments are in the "comments" section and are in some of the steps. She noted that one comment in particular, on Page 9, referred to "continuous learning...." and said that tonight was a real example of that. Ms. Bagley Jones added her comments, delegating more to the leadership team. Ms. Bagley Jones also said in terms of "STEM" comments, she feels the overall performance should be better than Proficient. But, since she didn't turn in her comments, she'll take responsibility for that.

Mr. Zullas pointed out the difference between the grades of "Proficient" and "Exemplary" and noted that Ms. Gormley made the Exemplary grade in many categories, and said that proficient denotes a high level of competence.

Ms. Kelly said that she would like to comment on the process. She said that this is an amazingly detailed review and is a huge evaluation. It is a great tool, but she said that she hates that this is public. She feels it is better done one-on-one and the process is productive, instead of a presentation. However, it's amazing to compare the School Committee's role and interaction with the superintendent and helping to achieve the vision. It's amazing what's changed in 12 years. A great part of this is because of Ms. Gormley's leadership, her amazing skills and unbelievable devotion to the town of Milton.

Ms. Bagley Jones added that Ms. Gormley is truly an exemplary superintendent. The chair entertained a motion to accept the document.

Move: Ms. Sheridan

Second: Ms. Kelly

Vote: 5-0-0

Finance Subcommittee:

Topic One: Ms. Kelly introduced the Approval of Vendor Warrant. Dr. Pavlicek read that the warrant was in the amount of \$584,701.56 Warrant #18.

Move: Ms. Kelly

Second: Mr. Zullas

Vote: 4-0-1 (Ms. Kelly abstained)

Topic Two: FY14 Final Budget (Attachment) Ms. Kelly presented the final budget for FY14. Dr. Pavlicek explained the document as a summary of the major budget items. It is a report. Ms. Kelly said, if there are no objections, this report should be posted to the website.

Topic Three: FY15 Budget Line Item (Attachment) (Vote) Ms. Kelly introduced this document, with salary and non-salary allocation. The total was \$39,357,890. in the FY 15 budget. Ms. Kelly moved to vote the line items.

Move: Ms. Kelly

Second: Mr. Zullas

Vote: 5-0-0

Topic Four: Quarterly Grants Report (Attachments) (Vote)

Ms. Kelly said these grants take a lot of hard work on behalf of administrators and teachers. She is grateful to those who do this, and grateful to those who award these grants. The following organization gave grants:

New England Dairy Council: \$4,000

BIDMC for Chris Herren \$3,000

BIDMC for Health Grant/Kreuzer "Good Decision Making"

Scholarship American/Ratheon "Math Hero" -- \$2,500 to Pierce.

There was a motion to accept all four grants.

Move: Ms. Kelly

Second: Mr. Zullas

Discussion: Ms. Bagley Jones asked to keep a running list of the grants

Vote: 5-0-0

Citizen Speak Topic Response: Mr. Walker noted that one speaker at Citizen's Speak suggested a SPED subcommittee and we should discuss this. Ms. Sheridan asked if it would be more appropriate to have a School Committee rep attend the SEPAC meetings. This might be a more effective way to communicate with them. Ms. Sheridan offered this as a friendly suggestion that that might be more efficient. Ms. Kelly said she thinks SEPAC is looking for a partnership, perhaps not a long-term relationship.

Next Meeting Agenda Items: Ms. Sheridan asked to revisit the Facility Subcommittee Expectations/goals? There was also a request to schedule the Athletic Director and the Tucker Site Council.

The Chair entertained a motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing collective bargaining strategy for MEA and negotiation strategy for Non-

Union Personnel and to adjourn directly from Executive Session and not return to Open Session.

Move: Mr. Zullas

Second: Ms. Bagley Jones

Roll Call Vote: 5-0-0

The meeting adjourned at 10:22 pm.