

Minutes of the School Committee
Regular Meeting
Milton High Library
Date: February 5th, 2015

Committee Present: Leroy Walker, Chair; Michael Zullas Vice Chair; Mary Kelly, Becky Padera.

Not Present: Kristan Bagley Jones and Lynda-Lee Sheridan.

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

Call to Order

The Chair called the February 5th meeting of the School Committee to order at 7pm.

Approve Agenda

The committee approved the agenda.

Superintendent's Report

Topic One: Data Presentation (French/English Programs) This was a data presentation given by Dr. Laura O'Dwyer, Associate Professor, Boston College, Department of Educational Research, Measurement and Evaluation; and Avery Newton, Doctoral Student, Boston College Department of Educational Research, Measurement and Evaluation.

This study was requested as a follow-up study to compare MCAS scores for students in the French and English programs. Dr. O'Dwyer conducted two studies in fall 2014 — the first study examined MCAS and demographic data for students in grades 3, 4 and 5 and conducted a cross-sectional analysis; and the second study examined prior MCAS and demographic data for students who are currently in grade 7.

To view the entire presentation, click this link:

<http://www.miltonps.org/documents/TestScoreComparisonsPresentation.pdf> Among the “takeaway” points from the presentation were the following:

- Student demographics differ across English and French Immersion programs
- When matched students were compared, students with similar characteristics had similar MCAS scores, regardless of program
- For grades 3 and 4, when demographic characteristics were considered all together, there was no evidence of a gap between the French and English MCAS scores (supported by two cohorts of students)
- For grade 5, the findings were inconsistent, and for grade 6 a difference remained

Ms. Kelly asked about how they matched students' scores against one another and Dr. O'Dwyer explained how this was done. Ms. Kelly asked about Dr. O'Dwyer's suggestion to improve communication and outreach to groups who are not equally represented in the French Immersion program and Dr. O'Dwyer explained why this would be beneficial to the district. Ms. Padera

noted that the balance between families who choose French Immersion and English has become more even. She asked if there were other ways to measure the two groups other than standardized testing. Dr. O'Dwyer said that standardized test scores are the accepted measure right now, but there are other means to gauge growth in other areas. She suggested in-house surveys, and offered to help the district come up with non-cognitive measures. Mr. Walker and Mr. Zullas asked about how this study would impact the district goal of reducing the proficiency gap. Mr. Walker asked if this type of analysis could be done in-house with a Data Specialist. Ms. Gormley thanked Dr. O'Dwyer and Ms. Newton for their hard work on this report. Ms. Kelly asked if there could be indicators in the report to show how many students in each group are at MCAS Proficiency levels.

The chairman entertained a motion to adjourn.

Move: Mr. Walker

Second: Mr. Zullas

Vote: 4-0-0

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15pm.