

Minutes of the School Committee
Retreat
Superintendent's Conference Room
Date: August 20, 2014

Committee Present: Leroy Walker, Chair, Michael Zullas, Vice Chair, Mary Kelly, Lynda-Lee Sheridan, Kristan Bagley-Jones (arrived late) Becky Padera.

Staff Present: Mary Gormley, Superintendent; Glenn Pavlicek, Assistant Superintendent for Business, Janet Sheehan, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Human Resources, Pierce Middle School Principal Dr. Karen Spaulding, Cunningham Principal Jonathan Redden.

Call to Order

The Chair called the August 20th meeting of the School Committee to order at 7:00. He entertained a motion to move into executive session for the purpose of contract negotiations with non-union personnel.

Move: Mr. Walker

Second: Mr. Zullas

Roll Call Vote: Unanimous.

*** Executive Session minutes here ***

When the School Committee returned to open session, Mr. Walker began by introducing Glenn Koocher, executive director of Director of MASC, who will serve as the facilitator for the retreat.

Approve Agenda

The chairman moved to approve the agenda for August 20, 2014.

Move: Ms. Kelly

Second: Ms. Padera

Vote: Unanimous.

The committee approved the agenda for August 20, 2014 with no changes.

Mr. Koocher began by asking the School Committee members for a list of successes:

Where did the District perform well last year?

School Committee members and administrators compiled the following list:

- Communication in all areas
- Data collection and analysis
- Benchmark analysis
- Moving forward on internal assessment
- Student-achievement driven budget development, building School Committee, Warrant Committee & Town Meeting support for budget and communicating that budget to the public.

- Implementation of advancement initiatives; PD and purchase of instructional materials and staffing.
- Consistency in curriculum, instruction and assessments.
- Implementation of STEM
- Advanced security initiatives
- Common planning time
- Overall culture focused on achievement and inclusion. to be specific: making sure everyone feels included
- Programs to keep children in district. children secure, flourishing, SPED. inclusion from top down.
- Increased and improved technology integration.
- Implementation of PARCC
- Better job of recognizing different types of student achievement
- Contract negotiations
- Our reading support program for English and French.
- ** note: Ms. Bagley Jones arrived at 7:21.
- High standard for staffing.
- Parent involvement is welcomed.
- Hiring.
- Bullying issue.

Added later:

- Technology integration, and in our advancement budget, we are creating a new position.

Where can the District's performance improve?

- 3rd to 4th grade growth based on scores
- Identify achievement gaps
- How we are using data & the way we're managing it. data systems
- Communication about French/English pathways.
- Diversity hiring
- Look at our subgroups/achievement data
- Improve outreach for students before they get to Kindergarten.
- Improve internal assessment capability and student achievement in math and science.
- See how internal assessment data correlates to MCAS/PARCC data.
- Improve support for teachers.
- Reach middle-of-the-road kids. Focus more on kids in the middle.
- Increase participation of non-white students in AP tests and honors level courses
- Same for athletic teams
- Improve/look at all levels, esp. high school at our scheduling.
- Social/emotional support.
- Every year, there are parents who say they have "no idea" about certain things. How do we reach these parents?
- Increase the balance between French and English. Maintain balance in terms of gender, special needs, size, diverse backgrounds.

Where should we focus our efforts and resources directed at improving student performance in the District?

- Professional Development for everything
- Address the Grade 4 issue.
- Initiatives/Academic Supports for New Students (newly arrived to Milton)
- Provide before and after school supports for students
- Focus on science, not just curriculum. build excitement for science careers.
- Look at implementing assessments -- progress monitoring tools for struggling readers in the early grades.
- Targeting resources at a system that can house the common assessment data.
- Limit class size and school size
- Mentoring programs for kids who fall through the cracks AND grant writer
- Limit athletic fees. Make fees go away
- Add, for grade 3,4 gap. Build in time for leaders to talk about what success they've had in improvement.
- Regarding fees, we need help with athletic budget.
- Building space

What are the most important resource gaps (mismatch between what needs to be accomplished and having the necessary tools, staff and strategy to be successful) that needs to be addressed?

- Looking at data, both math and science achievement, we have resource gaps.
- Extracurriculars -- this relates to the fees for athletics, drama, music, clubs
- Extra support personnel, teaching outside main area.
- Scheduling issues around music and art time.
- Our current PD budget
- Extended day.
- Athletic budget
- Prioritize Pre-K issues -- find space, fund program.
- No-cost Pre-K program.
- Explore extended-year programs, especially for SPED.
- Examine English program performance gap (between French & English)
- Achievement gap at Tucker school/negative comments from parents in the district.
- Tucker perception problem
- Deeply understand our subgroup challenge and appropriately match interventions and measure the effectiveness of intervention. We're getting better at understanding the subgroup, what makes them unique in terms of their needs, and measuring effectiveness of interventions and shaping them.
- Supports for the French program to keep them in the program?
- We are over-dependent on fundraising and spend an inordinate amount of time on fundraising efforts.
- We couldn't have put in PARCC without the fundraising for technology by MFE
- Override.

What do you think should be the primary goals for Milton for 2014-2016?

- EVALUATION TOOL
- STRATEGIC PLAN
- DATA
- RESOURCES/OVERRIDE
- PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- ASSESSMENT
- PROGRAM PLANNING & PRIORITIZATION
- RETENTION

Ms. Gormley said, regarding the retention issue, there are often 900 to 1,000 students leaving. She does not want them to leave because of academic issues. Ms. Gormley talked about the 8th grade girls hockey teams and how many of those players would have gone to private but now they are staying public. It's a communication issue.

- COMMUNICATION
- SPACE
- INNOVATION/TECHNOLOGY

There was discussion about a swimming pool, about the need to hold onto art/music rooms, not convert to classrooms.

- PERCEPTIONS/ PUBLIC RELATIONS
- ACHIEVEMENT GAP/OPPORTUNITY GAP (some students take AP/Athletics, etc)
- PARTICIPATION
- CAPITAL NEEDS
- WHOLE CHILD: the social/emotional well-being. "balanced scorecard." -- a series of evaluations. all the issues/discipline/behavioral issues, taking art and music.
- PERSONAL FINANCE/LIFE SKILLS (health)
- ACHIEVEMENT/CURRICULUM (science,math,health,writing)

Mr. Koocher then asked the group to prioritize and categorize the goals.

Goal #1: DATA, PD, EVALUATION, RESOURCES, ASSESSMENT

Goal #2: PARTICIPATION, WHOLE CHILD, LIFE SKILLS (health) OPPORTUNITY GAP

Goal #3: PERCEPTION/PR, RETAINING STUDENTS, COMMUNICATIONS

Goal #4: STRATEGIC PLAN, CAPITAL, SPACE, INNOVATION

Goal #5 PROGRAM PLANNING, ACHIEVEMENT GAP, SCIENCE/MATH, WRITING

Members then voted on their priorities:

Box 1 =9

Box 2= 6

Box 3 = 4

Box 4 = 4

Box 5 = 10

Mr. Koocher then asked the School Committee to develop these to reflect goals for 2014-15 or longer.

School Committee members discussed several concepts, including interdisciplinary work, setting high standards for the district, focus on innovation, building learning communities, etc.

Mr. Koocher said it was time to draft goals and asked the chairman for a plan to “wrap these up.”

Mr. Walker noted that each of the boxes contain more than one goal. He asked School Committee members if they had brought their own goals with them.

School Committee members then wrote their goals on the wall.

Ms. Padera:

- Well-developed Pre-K outreach program to reach students before entering K
- create well-funded exciting science curriculum K-12
- create more balance between English/French classes
- Increase growth from 3rd to 4th grade

Ms. Sheridan:

Effectively implement teacher evaluations at all schools with all teachers (time)

Mr. Walker:

- Narrowed academic proficiency and participation gaps by sub-group, including HN, BAA SWD and French/English Program by FY year end 2017
- Digital Technology Strategy for Academic Achievement by grade and subject area by FY 2016
- Develop math and science internal assessment capabilities and achievement action plans using ELA internal Assessment Model by fiscal Year End 2015
- Rolling three year financial/academic operations/capital plan by FY 2016.

Mr. Zullas:

- Improve Tucker Perception Problem
- Improve French/English Program Communication
- Narrow Extracurricular Resource Gaps

Ms. Kelly:

- Identify obstacles to English performance around elementary/develop strategies to break obstacles/implement
- Implement/Develop science/math program at elementary
- Identify how to support social emotional needs of students - implement in phases
- Develop around proficiency by the end of Grade 2 approach/hold back if needed
- Aspire to be the best school system in state.

School Committee members had a brief discussion of what the data specialist job description will be.

Mr. Walker said there are two separate challenges -- first, how do we get people to proficiency; and second, are we prepared to accept that there will always be a gap between white students and high needs students?

There was then conversation about how to draft the goals. The following six goals were the result:

#1 Identify support for social and emotional needs of students with preparation for life skills strategies for inclusion, expanded participation/involvement through a thoughtful, coordinated plan.

#2 Elementary School Marketing and Programs/Innovation to ensure success for all students that will be recognized throughout the town.

#3 Narrowed Academic Proficiency and participation gaps by subgroups including HN, BAA, SWD and by French/English programs by FY year end 2017.

#4 Digital Technology Strategy for Academic Achievement by grade and subject area by FY 2016

#5 Develop math and science internal assessment capabilities and achievement action plans using ELA internal Assessment Model by fiscal Year End 2015

#6 Rolling three year financial/academic/operations/capital plan by FY 2016.

At the conclusion of writing and approving these goals, the chairman entertained a motion to adjourn.

Move: Ms. Padera

Second: Ms. Sheridan

Vote: Unanimous

The meeting adjourned at 10:08pm.