

Minutes of the School Committee
Regular Meeting
Milton High Library
September 25th, 2013

Committee Present: Lynda-Lee Sheridan, Chair; Leroy Walker, Vice Chair; Mary Kelly, Becky Padera, Mike Zullas. Student Reps: Audrey Erikson and Matt McCarthy.

Not Present: Kristan Bagley Jones

Staff Present: Mary Gormley, Superintendent; John Phelan, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Personnel; Glenn Pavlicek, Assistant Superintendent for Business.

Call to Order

The Chair called the September 25th meeting of the School Committee to order at 7:03 pm.

Approve Agenda

The committee approved the agenda after removing the SC goals. (item 6a)

Citizens Speak

One gentleman, Calvin Hennick, came to discuss MCAS scores. He said he just moved to Milton last month. He asked about the stark differences among students of different ethnicities and among elementary schools. He asked School Committee members if this issue is on their radar.

Approval of Minutes

The chair entertained a motion to approve the *July 10th, 2013* minutes of the Milton School Committee.

Move: Ms. Walker

Second: Ms. Padera

Discussion: Zullas asked for an edit on page 2. On the third bullet, Mr. Zullas said would like the minutes to read "high morale," rather than "a lot of morale" in the community.

Vote: 5-0-0

The chair entertained a motion to approve the minutes of *July 30th, 2013*.

Move: Mr. Walker

Second: Ms. Padera

Discussion: Mr. Walker noted that the agenda referred to these minutes as July 31st. He asked for this set of minutes to reflect the correct date.

Vote: 5-0-0

Superintendent's Report

Topic One: MCAS Presentation (Attachment) Holly Concannon, Math and ELA Curriculum Coordinator for Cunningham & Collicot; Amy Gale, Math and ELA Curriculum Coordinator for Glover, and Pierce Middle School Humanities Coordinator; John Phelan, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Personnel; and Courtney Walsh, Math/Business/Technology Department Head at Milton High School were on hand to make the presentation. The group went over the most recent MCAS data, explained the terminology and the process for reporting scores. Mr. Phelan said that there are areas of outstanding progress and areas where more work needs to be done. He said that each building principal will be presenting their own schools' scores to their school community.

After the presentation, School Committee members asked questions. Mr. Walker asked if the administration would post the presentation on the website, and include not only the questions, but the answers also. He noted that for the districtwide data, the percentage of warning/failing is low, but it doesn't seem to be going down at all. What can we do to make that go down? Mr. Phelan replied that these students have been identified and there are strategies/interventions in place. Mr. Walker also asked what accounts for the gap between Tucker and the other schools' performance scores. Mr. Phelan said Tuckers' Student Performance Index is not as high, but they've been successful at showing growth each year. Two years ago, they had the highest growth in math in the state, but not the highest index. Principal Uretsky worked very hard at moving students from one category to the next. Mr. Phelan pointed out that Tucker achieved Level One, on its own, after years of not meeting AYP, and for three years, Tucker has met all targets in all categories. Mr. Walker then suggested that, rather than reviewing individual schools' MCAS results one at a time, the School Committee should do it all in one night. Principals can talk to one another. Ms. Sheridan agreed. Ms. Padera asked if our attendance affected our scores. He said there was one student at Glover who would have affected whether it was a Level One or a Level Two. The district had to appeal, etc. Ms. Sheridan asked what the cut off date is for inclusion in our MCAS data, when new students come to our schools. She was informed that students who join the MPS prior to Oct. 1st are counted in the Milton scores. Students who come after that date, their MCAS data is reflected in their former school/district. Ms. Kelly asked if there was a chart that shows the "district elementary" scores, but was told that does not exist. Ms. Kelly said she would like to see if we could look at the collective elementary grade, and then see the score once they arrive at Middle School. She also requested the "bubble chart" was presented last year, by school.

Ms. Gormley talked about the advancement initiative and explained the background to this. Mr. Phelan explained how internal assessments are done at each school, and that all the schools adhere to the same standards. He noted that sharing info across the grade levels and across schools is currently being done. Mr. Zullas noted that grades 4, 7 and 8 are a little lower for proficiency levels and asked if that has been looked at? Ms. Concannon said the jump from grade 3 to 4, is academically challenging and the MCAS is much harder. The ELA section requires a very lengthy essay. There has typically been less progress in Grade 4, statewide. Mr. Zullas said that it appears that heavy emphasis is placed on growth. Are we focusing too much on the test, and testing? Mr. Phelan said the district is mindful of that. Good teaching, aligned with a good

curriculum, will result in good scores. Ms. Concannon said that the administration does not support "teaching to the test." The goal is for our students to be able to think and be able to defend their answer. Also, to expose students to quality literature, ask them to think like mathematicians, this will provide our community with good thinkers. Ms. Kelly said she'd like an update on science; what are we doing to get everybody to proficient in science? Have we looked at "time on task," - is there enough time in the elementary school schedule? Mr. Phelan said we need to look at time on task -- for example, rotate schedules at middle school? Begin block days for middle school?

Happenings: Ms. Gormley congratulated the MHS Debate Team's performance at Yale. Audrey Erikson explained the Japanese exchange program. Also, October 5th is Cans for Cats bottle drive and October 6th is Celebrate Milton.

Chairman's Report

Topic One: Security Improvements, Part 2. Leroy Walker, School Committee Vice Chair gave an update. He said we've made significant progress. All access controls are up and running. They are working on providing adequate security at MHS after-hours and some building code issues. He said there still are some questions, but the population has embraced the efforts to make the schools as safe as possible. He would like to commend Mr. Ritchie.

Ms. Sheridan asked if we could move Mr. Ritchie's presentation to earlier in the evening. Mr. Walker said he'd like to go over the spreadsheets.

Item 7b moved here: Mr. Walker read through the spreadsheet (handout) which itemized the technology needs, as well as the capital requests. He recommended that we approve them to Capital Planning committee. Ms. Padera asked if we have a technology committee, and who makes the decision of what types of technology should be purchased. iPads or Chromebooks? Mr. Phelan replied that the district is piloting small number of each of the devices. Ms. Sheridan said some districts are doing a "BYOD" (bring your own device) -- an idea worth exploring. Ms. Kelly said the list is prioritized 1-5, and Smartboards aren't in the top five. She suggested the School Committee reconsider the ranking. Mr. Walker agreed and said we should put Smartboards on the top of the list.

Ms. Kelly asked for "Blue Hill Ave" to be changed to "Blue Hill Parkway," on the capital request. Mr. Ritchie said he'd like to rip up the road, add a better sidewalk. The road from Milton High to Blue Hill Parkway was originally designed as an access road, with multiple gates. The road was intended to be closed, other than for events. Ms. Sheridan asked if we could put in speed bumps. Mr. Ritchie said that speed bumps are not popular with firetrucks and plows. Mrs. Sheridan stated that the safety of our hundreds of students who daily walk and drive on that road should take priority over the firetrucks and plows. Ms. Kelly suggested a Stop Sign.

Ms. Sheridan said that we should let Mr. Ritchie and Mr. Pattison prioritize the list. Ms. Kelly said it's a school committee goal to put the Smartboards on the top. Mr. Walker said this is a School Committee plan, not an administration plan. Mr. Pavlicek said Mr. Pattison originally had network hardware as #1 and Smartboard as #2. It's high up on his priority.

The chair entertained a motion to accept the FY15-19 Capital Requests.

Move: Mr. Walker

Second: Ms. Kelly

Vote: 5-0-0

Topic Two: Superintendents Evaluation (Attachment.) Ms. Gormley explained how the evaluation process works. There's an agreed-upon tool for teachers, which the DESE has recommended for Superintendent and administrative evaluations also. She said she thinks it's an excellent tool. Mr. Zullas asked where the goals could be found and Ms. Kelly asked if the goals were posted online.

Topic Three: Proposed Milton Public School End-of-Year Data Points (Attachment) Ms. Sheridan reminded the SC that we had voted the changes in the SC calendar at our last meeting but deferred the discussion about the data points to get more input. Mr. Walker had compiled the recommended additions to the list. No suggested deletions were recorded.

Move: Mr. Walker

Second: Ms. Padera

Discussion: Members read through the handout and made revisions. There was some debate about whether to sort scores by classroom, rather than by grade. Ms. Kelly said she would like to see the scores sorted by French/English program. There was also discussion about teachers' evaluation ratings. Mrs. Sheridan does not agree with setting a data point that identifies test scores by class/teacher. Because of the number of edits and the issue of re-formatting the document, the chair made a motion to table the vote. She said she would like to combine everything into one document, let the Superintendent look at it, then vote it at the next meeting.

No Vote.

Finance Subcommittee:

Topic One: FY13 End of Year Report (Attachment) Ms. Kelly said she appreciated all the work that went into this report. For the first time in many years, it's ready before October 1st. The chair entertained a motion to approve.

Move: Ms. Kelly

Second: Mr. Walker

Discussion: Dr. Pavlicek thanked Lisa McDonough in the business office for preparing this report. Ms. Kelly requested that the summary sheet be posted online. The last chart at the end is very useful.

Vote: 5-0-0

Item 7b: (Moved up higher in agenda). Topic Two: Milton Public School FY15-19 Capital Requests (Attachment) Consolidated Facilities Director William Ritchie.

School Building Committee Report:

It was reported that the SBC had their last meeting, during which they voted to spend the remainder of their funds to pay for security improvements. They submitted an article to Town Meeting to disestablish this committee. In addition, there will be a \$120,000 rebate from the insurance company, which will be used to offset the cost of debt service. This group plans to prepare a brief summary report for Town Meeting in October.

Old Business: Citizen Speak Topic Response: None.

Next Meeting Agenda Items: none.

The Chair entertained a motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing negotiation strategy for Collective Bargaining with AFSCME and MEA; as well as the deployment of Security Personnel and to adjourn directly from Executive Session, not to return to Open Session.

Move: Mr. Walker

Second: Ms. Padera

Roll Call Vote: 5-0-0

The meeting adjourned at 9:48 pm