



# PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MILTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02186

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To: Faculty, Staff and Parents of Milton Public Schools  
From: Mary C. Gormley, Superintendent  
Re: E-Blast Newsletter  
Date: September 2, 2010

From the Desk of the Superintendent:

*I hope this email finds you all energized and ready for the start of the 2010-11 school year in the Milton Public Schools. The beginning of the school year is an exciting time as staff and students come back refreshed and eager to work together for a successful year.*

*I want to recognize the hard work of our custodians and the maintenance department to get our classrooms, our gyms and our buildings ready for our teachers and students. Additional thanks go to the dedicated support staff at the Central office, Community Schools, teachers, and staff in our schools who worked all summer to get things ready for our students.*

*Every student, every parent, and every staff member plays an important role in forming the identity of a school district. I appreciate the dedication, effort, and enthusiasm each of you puts forth in our pursuit of a successful district. It's a privilege --- and a source of pride for me --- to serve as your superintendent. I hope you all have a great year. – Mary C. Gormley*

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE UPDATE

An important change has been made to the School Committee Schedule. Meetings have been changed to Wednesdays at 7:00pm through December 8<sup>th</sup>. The location will remain at the Milton High School Library. The dates are as follows: September 8<sup>th</sup>, September 22<sup>nd</sup>, October 6<sup>th</sup>, October 20<sup>th</sup>, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, November 17<sup>th</sup> and December 8<sup>th</sup>.

The most recent meeting of the School Committee took place on Tuesday, August 24<sup>th</sup>. At this meeting, School Committee members voted to appropriate money towards security cameras for the middle and high school (see Fundraising/Grants for more info on this topic). Also, a report was presented from the Consolidated Facilities Subcommittee. This proposal has been moving forward and there will be a joint session of the Board of Selectmen and School Committee members on September 15<sup>th</sup> for further discussion.

Three new administrators were introduced: Andrew Boles, Assistant Principal at Pierce Middle School; Marilyn Decker, Director of Science K-12; and Amy Gale, Pierce Middle School Curriculum Coordinator.

The next meeting of the School Committee will be held on Wednesday, September 8<sup>th</sup>. Again, please note the change to Wednesday meetings through mid-December.

## CURRICULUM NEWS

We are excited to announce that we are going to begin a Mock Trial program in the Milton Public Schools. This is a program we have wanted to launch for several years and now, thanks to the efforts of Deb Tracy, we are prepared to go ahead.

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Ms. Tracy is a Hingham attorney who we have worked with for many years in her role with the Discovering Justice program. She will be mentoring our Mock Trial Program at Pierce Middle School, which will offer an overview of the practice of law. This program is designed to sharpen analytical skills, public speaking and build confidence for students. With Ms. Tracy's help, we also plan to launch this program at Milton High School this fall. The MHS team will compete at the state level. Details for students will be published within the month.

For more information about the Mock Trial programs, sponsored by the Massachusetts Bar Association, please visit this link:

<http://mocktrial.massbar.org/>

The 12-week program will culminate with a mock trial held in a real courtroom with an actual judge and a volunteer jury. We are looking for any parent volunteers, who may be interested in helping with this type of after-school activity, particularly those with a background in law. Please contact my office at 617-696-4808 or send an email to [mgormley@miltonps.org](mailto:mgormley@miltonps.org) if you are interested in volunteering.

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Additionally, we also plan to expand our Debate Team, which made its highly successful debut last year. This team was led by Milton High English teacher Nick Fitzgerald, and attorney Phil Tedesco, a recent Harvard Law graduate and husband of one of our teachers. The team was graciously mentored by Milton Academy's Speech and Debate Coach, Susan Marianelli.

Our students competed at the state level in eight Saturday competitions. Four teams qualified for the State Debate Tournament, and one advanced to the semi-finals. Sadly for us -- and happily for him -- Phil Tedesco has joined a law firm in Boston and is not able to work with our team again this year. We are now looking for another attorney to work with Mr. Fitzgerald during the upcoming season.

A debate coach must have a grasp of the types of sources available, a willingness to learn various arguments, an ability to understand both sides of a resolution, and knack for incorporating evidence in a convincing and logical manner. Most importantly, a debate coach must enjoy working with and mentoring intellectually curious and motivated high school students.

Our debate season runs from mid-September to early April. Although the team has yet to establish a practice schedule for the 2010-2011 season, students usually meet before and/or after school twice a week -- sometimes more, sometimes less, frequently depending on the competition schedule. The commitment would also involve eight Saturday competitions that usually run from 7:00am to 7:00pm and take place across eastern Massachusetts, as well as one national tournament, most likely in Washington D.C. in early December.

Please contact my office at 617-696-4808 or send an email to [mgormley@miltonps.org](mailto:mgormley@miltonps.org) if you are interested in volunteering.

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We have another very exciting announcement regarding our high school. For the first time in over two decades, the entire Music Department of Milton High School has collaborated to resurrect a powerful symbol of community pride and tradition.....The Milton High School "WILDCAT" Marching Band!!

We are seeking donations to help us get our Marching Band "up and playing" as soon as possible. Please contact my office at 617-696-4808/09 or send an e-mail to [mgormley@miltonps.org](mailto:mgormley@miltonps.org) if you are interested in contributing.

Our students will be taking the field for halftime during the home football games beginning in late September sporting new red and black uniforms and color guard. Please come to a home game to cheer them on. It's been too long!

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The following information has been submitted by Matthew J. Gillis, our School Business Administrator

Since late spring, the Milton Public Schools has been able to accept payments for its optional programs that have user fees over the internet. So far, we have set up on-line payment for five of our user fee programs: After School, Before School, Full Day Kindergarten, Transportation, and High School Athletics. Middle School and High Student Activity fees are the next two programs expected to be available for on-line payment in September.

The link to make on-line payments can be found at the bottom right-hand corner of the Milton Public Schools homepage at <http://www.miltonps.org/>

Many parents do their banking and pay their bills on-line and would like the same convenience to do so with the seasonal or annual fees associated with the optional programs provided by the Milton Public Schools. This secure on-line payment system with Unibank enables the user to pay via electronic check (with no processing charge) or via credit card (which has sliding scale processing fee.) By “secure” Unibank uses a secure banking website for financial transactions and does not store the user’s account information. The Milton School Department and Town Treasurer’s Office is happy to provide this service as an option for payment to the parents and guardians of our students.

So far, this service has resulted in improved fee collection, reduced the frequency of bounced checks and lost paper checks, and improved the efficiency of record keeping at the School Business Office and Treasurer’s Office.

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Finally, we would like to remind parents that our School Committee passed a new Bullying/Peer Aggression Policy last spring. This document was drafted by an administrative team lead by Milton High School assistant principal Alan Cron. Teachers have been updated on the new policy, which will be enacted and enforced with the start of school. For a copy of the policy, please visit this link:

<http://www.miltonps.org/documents/BullyingPeerAggressionPolicy.pdf>

## OPEN HOUSES

In the month of September, we traditionally hold Open Houses in each of our schools. Please see the schedule below:

Collicot: Open House is Sept. 30<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m.

Cunningham: Open House is Sept 29<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm

Glover: Open House is Sept. 16<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 to 8:00pm

Tucker: Open House is Wed. Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup> from 6:00 to 8:00pm

Pierce: Open House is Sept. 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6:30pm in the auditorium. Parents and teachers will move to individual classes at starting at 7:00pm

Milton High: Open House is Sept. 14<sup>th</sup>. We will start with a brief presentation in the auditorium. After the presentation, parents will follow the schedule of their sons and daughters to listen to a course overview by the classroom teacher.

## NEW TEACHERS/ADMINISTRATORS

We have hired twenty-eight new teachers and three new administrators. Please go to <http://www.miltonps.org/documents/NewTeacherBios.pdf> to view short biographies on all of our new staff.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Kindergarten Days are upon us! In cooperation with the Milton Early Childhood Alliance, Milton area businesses are participating in Kindergarten Days from September 4<sup>th</sup> -11<sup>th</sup> to let children know how important their education is to all of us. During this week, the sponsors listed will offer free gifts or discounts to children who are entering Kindergarten this fall and wear their bright yellow "I'm Going To Kindergarten" t-shirt. Participating businesses will display a special sign in their window as a reminder. Students must be wearing his or her yellow Kindergarten t-shirt. Many thanks to the Kindergarten Day sponsors: Bent's Cookie Factory, Ichiro Sushi, Mackie's Barber Shop, Mozzarella's Pizzeria, Mr. Chan's, Radio Coffeehouse, Starbucks and the Fruit Center.

If your child does not have a Kindergarten t-shirt yet, please contact your school office to claim his or her shirt. Go to <http://www.miltonps.org/documents/KDaysPressRelease.pdf> to view the press release from the MECA.

## GRANT/FUNDRAISING NEWS

This year, for the first time, Milton High School is participating in a Facebook campaign sponsored by Kohl's Department Stores which will award a half-million dollar grant.

If MHS receives enough votes in the Kohl's campaign, the grant would be used to eliminate the athletic fees paid by students.

Milton parent Denise Queally has been working with our grant-writer, Chris Masalsky to get the page up and running.

Every year, Milton High School struggles to meet the ever-increasing expenses of its athletics program. In 2009, it was almost necessary to cancel the spring sports season due to lack of funds. At the time, students, families, the Milton Boosters raised over \$50,000 to continue the season.

Because of the funding situation, Milton's athletic fees are among the highest in the area - \$250 per sport, and \$500 for ice hockey. Although the Milton Public Schools offer financial assistance to needy families and has also instituted a family cap, the necessity to charge an athletic fee is one that affect entire school community.

Many studies have shown that student participation in athletics results in higher academic achievement, better school attendance, reductions in risky behavior (such as drug and alcohol use) and increased school spirit.

Milton High School would use the \$500,000 award from Kohl's to eliminate fees for the next four years – during which time, there will be a plan to fundraise toward making the fee eliminations permanent.

To cast a vote or to learn more about the campaign, visit the Milton (Mass.) High School page on Facebook and follow the directions or click this link:

<http://apps.facebook.com/KohlsCares/school/440371/milton-high>

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We also have good news about addressing the need for security cameras at both our middle and high schools. At the most recent School Committee meeting, we announced that funding has been procured for the cameras and installation will begin this fall. Security cameras were originally part of the plans for the Milton High School, but were value engineered out. Now thanks to a \$50,000 donation from the Copeland Family Foundation and the School Building Committee, along with a commitment of up to \$200,000 from the School Committee, the project is moving forward. Three proposals have been submitted to install both internal and external cameras which will link to the Milton Police.

## NEWS AROUND TOWN

On September 4<sup>th</sup> The Friends of the Blue Hills are looking for volunteers for a trail work event on Saturday, September 4<sup>th</sup> from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**25 Gile Road, Milton, Massachusetts 02186**

Join the FBH Trail Crew on a variety of projects in the reservation. They will provide the tools and training, and they need volunteers to supply the energy and enthusiasm. Projects include brushing back trails and dirt from drainage ditches. All projects will offer a hike to the work sites. Wear long pants and gloves. Water, snacks and lunch provided. To register, call 617-698-1802, ext. 2

## ATHLETICS

Many of you may have read some of the recent coverage given to the issue of head injuries in sports.

The Milton Public Schools are proud to announce that this year, we have started using a pre-head injury testing system call Impact. Basically, this involves we are administering a baseline test on the majority of our student-athletes. The Impact system baseline tests for cognitive, short term and long term memory as well as past injury information in the athletes. Should they receive a head injury the system then has follow up tests that can help in the athletes' doctor's evaluation.

The tests were given in one of our computer labs with 15 athletes at a time and lasting about 25 minutes. The tests were administered by our athletic trainer Phil Genatossio.

With this system in place, we have the capability to test 600 athletes this year. We have started with over 225 in all levels and grades of football, soccer, field hockey and cheerleading this fall. We will be conducting this test with our winter and spring athletes as well.

Most of the teams in the Bay State conference, in which we compete, are using this system. It is also timely that we have begun with this system, since there have been new head injury laws and regulations governed by the state and our state association the MIAA.

If parents have any questions about Impact and/or our athletic program policies, please contact our AD, Steve Traister at [straister@miltonps.org](mailto:straister@miltonps.org)

All of the fall sports at Milton High School have begun practices. For information on coaches, eligibility and a listing of sports, visit this link:

<http://www.miltonps.org/documents/FallAthleticInformation.pdf>

All teams' schedules are listed on a central website this year. For a listing of schedules, visit this link:  
<http://www.highschoolsports.net/month/Milton-High-School-Milton-MA/All/All/All/2010/September/>

## AMBASSADOR PAGE

As part of our E-blast, we highlight student, teachers and members of the community whose hard work deserves recognition. Please read about some of their outstanding accomplishments below:

Faculty/Staff: As you all can undoubtedly attest, this was a very hot summer. All the more reason we can be grateful for our custodial staff here in the Milton Public Schools. Not only did they keep our buildings and ground beautiful during these hot summer months, they did so despite the presence of thousands of students who attended summer programs in many of our buildings. We hope you notice how clean and lovely our schools look when you attend Open Houses later this month. Many, many thanks to: Mary Barone, Steven Barry, Delroy Butler, Michael Buzzel, Jesse Connelly, Ryan Connelly, James Connelly, William Connors, Patrick Crowe, Felipe Depina, James Egan, Mark Goonan, Victor Levine, Tom Malloy Brian Mearn John Riley, Jason Scherer, Steven Scherer, Peter Schibley, John Studley, Charles Tacey, Nelson Taylor, Richard Walker, Judith Whalen, Robert Willett, Scott Williams and Janice Wilson. In addition, thanks also to our food services van driver Bill Fitzpatrick, who worked in maintenance over the summer.

Students: I would like to personally welcome our new Kindergarten students who will be joining us next week. This year, 311 students will be enrolled in our Kindergarten classrooms throughout the district. This group is among the most fun to watch on their first day, as they are full of wonder at their new environment. I would also like to welcome their parents and guardians to the community of Milton Public School parents and encourage them to be in touch with their school's PTO.

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Volunteer: Nearly all our schools either currently have or are planning to build an Outdoor Classroom space. We are very grateful to the Milton Outdoor Classroom volunteers, who spend a great deal of time keeping these beautiful gardens and outdoor spaces well-tended during the summer months.