



PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MILTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02186

MARY C. GORMLEY
Superintendent of Schools
(617)-696-4808/09

JOHN P. PHELAN
Assistant Superintendent
For Curriculum & Personnel
(617)-696-4811/12

MATTHEW J. GILLIS
School Business Administrator
(617)-696-5041

To: Milton Public Schools Parents, Guardians, Faculty & Staff
From: Mary C. Gormley, Superintendent of Schools
Re: E-Update, Monday, April 12, 2010

In past letters to you I have recognized students, teachers, support staff, parents and volunteers, but never the six individuals who carry the most responsibility for what goes on inside our schools – our six building principals.

A school principal holds one of the most demanding and important positions within the educational structure. The principal of a school is responsible for everything -- from the education of each student to the hiring, supervising and evaluating of teachers and staff to the scheduling. Nearly all successful principals were previously outstanding teachers and innately understand that excellent instruction results in high academic achievement for all students.

The principal is responsible for the climate and morale of their school. They must be an effective communicator and work cooperatively with peers, parents and the community at large. A principal must successfully divide their time between being an effective manager and strong instructional leader. This person must have a vision and work collaboratively with teachers, staff, and parents to create a culture within their school that encourages, celebrates and maximizes the educational experience for each student.

Here in Milton we are fortunate to have six very gifted, talented, dedicated and intelligent school principals. Each brings a unique set of skills to the complex role of the principalship and, ultimately, to our Leadership Team. I can proudly say that all of Milton's principals are outstanding educators and have a vision for their respective schools. Our principals respect human differences and support risk taking and innovation in education - two of our Core Values.

I want to thank and recognize Dr. Dore Korschun for her years of service to the Milton Public Schools and congratulate her on her retirement. It has been my privilege to work with Dr. Korschun in her roles as teacher and principal. She was one of Milton's first French Immersion teachers and set the highest of standards for everyone who worked with her. To this day, I continue to evaluate teachers using her as my standard of excellence. Serving in her role as Cunningham and Glover principal, Dr. Korschun has contributed to improving education here in Milton. She leaves her mark as the initiator and architect of several programs, such as the Co-taught Classroom, Outdoor Classroom, Grade Five Integration, French Immersion and FLES programs, among other accomplishments. Dr. Korschun's strength is in identifying and hiring outstanding teachers and mentoring those teachers. She is an advocate for each of the teachers and students in her school.

I also want to thank Ms. Christine Gerber for the three years she has served as principal of the Cunningham Elementary School and congratulate her on her appointment to the principalship of the K-8 Kennedy-Longfellow School in Cambridge. Ms. Gerber has worked with her staff in integrating the STEP and LEAP classes and focusing on inclusion for all students. Ms. Gerber and Mr. Schultz have worked collaboratively to successfully share a school site while protecting the integrity of each school. I was particularly impressed with her monthly "Character Assemblies," which recognized students who exemplified various virtues, such as kindness, empathy and friendship at school.

As a principal, one can directly affect teacher instruction and student achievement and see the results every day, right in front of them, in the faces of both their students and their teachers.

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School Committee Update

There have been two School Committee meetings since my last E-blast. Below are summaries of both.

School Committee for April 6th

This meeting began with a presentation by Dr. Erik Ask, a Glover parent and head liaison for the Safe Routes to School Program, a state program that encourages walking and biking to school. Dr. Ask discussed the recent adoption of bicycle and pedestrian safety training at Cunningham and Glover schools, and he hopes to expand this to Tucker and Collicot to include all four elementary schools. He pointed out some of the improvements, such as additional bike racks, “Share Lane” markings, and improved crosswalks, made available through grants.

For more information please view this YouTube video from Safe Routes to School:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqBp8w0KCP8>.

Next, we heard from the World Language Committee. Please see the item below that discusses their work in detail.

There was a discussion of the upcoming School Committee calendar, with a few date changes. The next meeting will be April 13th, followed by a meeting April 28th.

A report from the finance subcommittee reviewed potential fee changes for the 2010-2011 school year, resources available for Full Day Kindergarten Programs, and a more detailed break-out of budget numbers.

There was also a report from the Consolidated Facilities Subcommittee Meeting, which reviewed the Warrant articles that will be decided upon at the upcoming Annual Town Meeting.

School Committee for March 30th

This meeting began with recognition of the Tucker Future Problem Solvers Team. The School Committee congratulated fifth-graders Andrew Duro, Liam Chase, Allegra Giddings and Madison Lipson, along with their coach, Lori Henry.

Next, the winners of the Boston Globe Scholastic Art competition were recognized. Milton had four middle school winners, and nine high school winners.

At Milton High, the winners were: Ardara Berry, Dana Hankard, Alexandria Hutchinson, Alexander Jamal, Rachel Lipton, Caeleigh MacNeil, James Quach, Lauren Stafford and Graham Strang.

The Pierce Middle School winners were Elizabeth Magnuson (Gold Key), Cate Pappano (Silver Key), Shanaz Mahmood (Silver Key) and Emma Greenawalt (Honorable Mention.) The work of all other Globe Scholastic winners can be viewed in the lobby of Milton High.

Holly Concannon, Elementary Math and K-8 Technology Coordinator for Milton Public Schools, was introduced to the School Committee. She explained her goals to support teachers in the areas of math and technology, coordinate professional development, and work with students. Ms. Concannon, a Milton resident, also took questions from the members.

Next, Barbara Plonski and Dr. Karen Spaulding presented a mid-cycle update on science data to the School Committee. Schools had various degrees of success on the most recent science MCAS scores. To see the full results, click here:

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

The new Saturday Program at Pierce Middle School was discussed. This program, sponsored by the Milton Foundation for Education and the Milton Public Schools, offered enrichment courses to more than 120 students during a six-week session held on Saturday mornings. The program, run by Cunningham teacher Erin Power, was highly successful and is expected to expand next year.

There was also a great deal of praise for the recent Faculty Talent Show held for two consecutive nights at Milton High School. Our brave and talented teachers, administrators and staff raised more than \$10,000 for the high school athletics program, clubs and activities.

The Milton High School Debate Team announced their recent success at a state competition (see item below).

Other news presented at the School Committee meeting included the naming of Stephanie Nephew as principal of Glover Elementary School. Ms. Nephew will be replacing Dr. Dore Korschun, who will be retiring at the end of this school year.

It was also announced that Christine Gerber, Principal of Cunningham Elementary School, has accepted a job in the Cambridge Public School system. A screening committee is being formed to assist with the hiring for this position.

Next, there was some discussion about next year's budget. The Warrant Committee recently released additional data, showing that the number of staff positions to be cut next year may be fewer than what was expected.

Initially, the schools were told to expect a level-funded budget, and we were asked to detail what reductions would have to be made. We detailed 24.4 positions – administrators, teachers, aides, custodian and support staff - that would have to be cut. We were then told that the FY11 school budget will be \$415,000 above level-funded.

The Warrant Committee's funding means the restoration of 7.1 classroom teachers on the Reduction List of 24.4 staff (administrators, teachers, aides, custodian and support staff). This leaves 17.3 reductions remaining.

Finally, as part of the Health & Wellness Subcommittee, School Committee Member Kristen Bagley Jones discussed the work of Glover parent Todd Ducharme, who has instituted CATZ training for parent volunteers at our elementary schools for recess. This is a wonderful program that we would like to expand in the future.

Curriculum News

There is some fantastic news out of Pierce Middle School. A group of 22 students has been recognized as winners of the 2010 Cambridge Science Festival Curiosity Award. These students and their families will be honored at an Awards Brunch/Exhibition of Student Work on May 2nd at MIT. In addition, their work will be published in a book of which each will receive a copy.

Please join me in congratulating the following winners: **Grade 6 Mercury Team:** Niamh Lynch, Elizabeth Lawless, Shannon Fitzgerald, Parker Hall, **Saturn Team:** Sarah Monderer, Noel McCampbell, Sophie Cousineau, **Neptune Team:** Ky-Nam Dang, Catherine Casaz, Erin McCarthy, Caroline Johnson, Rachel Corcoran, **Grade 7 Yellowstone Team:** Maggie Kleiman, Grace LeBlanc, **Grade 8 Aquarius Team:** Tia Marathas, Aaliyah Emmanuel, **Phoenix Team:** Shanaz Mahmood, May Chauvet, Kevin McBreaty, **Orion Team:** Alexandra Jones, Elizabeth Magnuson and Aidan Quinn.

This is a wonderful achievement. Congratulations to these students, their teachers, and their families.

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Another bit of good news: Our newly formed MHS Debate team finished its season on a high note. Maya Rosmarin and Ailsa Jeffries won first place in the "novice" category at the statewide Public Forum Debate Tournament. "Novice" is a term synonymous with junior varsity. This essentially means that Maya and Ailsa are the best junior varsity team in the entire state.

Maya and Ailsa also made it to the semi-finals in the "Varsity" Public Forum Debate Tournament. There were 43 other teams competing on Saturday, March 27th, and because it was the state level competition these were the 43 best teams in the state.

This essentially means that as underclassmen, Maya and Ailsa out-performed all but three varsity debate teams in the entire state! Considering this is the Debate Team's first year; this is fantastic. They deserve a lot of credit for their commitment and work ethic.

Two more Debate Team members, Catherine Spino and Isabella Carter, competed on April 10th in the State Speech Competition. This was a performance-based presentation, and Catherine and Isabella previously competed with students from across the Commonwealth for the chance to present at this event. Please join me in congratulating the Debate Team and its coaches, Nick Fitzgerald and Phil Tedesco, on a great first year.

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We hope that everyone has heard the good news about our most recent hires. Stephanie Nephew, Pierce Humanities (English & Social Studies) Coordinator, has been named the new principal of the Glover Elementary School. She will be replacing Dr. Dore Korschun, who is retiring at the end of this school year. Congratulations to Ms. Nephew and best wishes to Dr. Korschun in her retirement.

Michelle Kruezer, Milton High School Math Teacher, has been appointed Milton High School's Math/Business and Technology Department Head. She will be replacing Paul Ajemian who is retiring at the end of this school year. Congratulations to Ms. Kruezer and best wishes to Paul Ajemian in his retirement.

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Congratulations to sixth-grader Simon Eder, who recently won the title of Geography Bee Champion at Pierce Middle School. As our middle school champ, Simon advanced to a written Geography Exam, which he took on January 25. This exam qualified him to compete in the 2010 Massachusetts State Geographic Bee at Worcester State College this past weekend. Simon represented both Pierce Middle School and the town of Milton at this competition.

World Language Program Committee Report

Several months ago I formed a World Language Program Committee (WLPC) to analyze the current state of the World Language Program. The goal was to produce some information that the Administration could use when making budgetary and curriculum decisions for upcoming school years. This committee consists of representatives from School Committee, the School Administration, the World Languages Director, Elementary School teachers, and Milton Public School parents from both the English (FLES) and French Immersion programs.

The WLPC met for a total of 20 hours in meetings and was charged with collecting and analyzing data to support their recommendations. One tool for the collection data was a survey to parents and teachers. The goal of both surveys (which were anonymous) was to collect the thoughts, ideas, perceptions and input of our parents and teachers on this subject and to use that data in our decision making process.

At the most recent school committee meeting, this group presented several options for consideration.

The first option was called **French Partner Schools**. In this option, two schools will be partnered together to consolidate the French Immersion (FI) classes. Between the two schools in the partnership, FI will be housed in only one school per grade.

The second option was called **French Continuum Strand**. In this option, the FI classes will be consolidated across the district into one school. Among the four schools, the FI will be housed in only one school per grade.

The third option was called **French Integration in Grade 5**. In this option, students in Grade 5 are assigned to different classes with different students by subject. This allows for student enrollment and assignment to be balanced in this particular grade and school. The committee concluded that the Integration Option could be better used as an internal district option that would be decided by School Administration after further review and discussion with principals and teachers. This option was removed from consideration as a restructuring possibility for the purposes of the report.

Lottery/Capping of FI: In this option, the Superintendent would fix the number of classes of FI per school and the number of seats per class. Families would select to enter the FI Lottery. If more students select the French than seats are available, a lottery would be held to determine who was enrolled into FI. If open seats were available in another school, families would have the option of entering a lottery for those seats as well. Students who are not selected to attend FI would instead be enrolled in English program classes per the Elementary Student Assignment Plan.

Alternate Assignment: Designate a fixed number of classes of FI in each school that is consistent year to year. Designate up front the class size limit each year. If more students apply than seats available, the district would assign those students based on either 1.) lottery or 2.) Elementary Student Assignment Plan. The Superintendent of Schools would have the discretion to either fill all existing classes with students or to open an “auxiliary class” at one or more schools. Any student not selected to fill a FI seat in his “home school” would be given the opportunity to attend FI at an “auxiliary class.” The “auxiliary class” and students would remain in the assigned school for the entire five years of their elementary experience. However, other siblings of students who are placed in an “auxiliary class” do not necessarily transfer or enroll to the same school. These siblings will follow the Elementary Student Assignment Process for their “home school.”

To view the entire presentation in further detail, please click below:

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

Upcoming Events

There will be a no School Committee meeting on **Tuesday, April 27th**, due to the town wide election. There are several contested races this year, including for School Committee seats, so be sure to vote. The School Committee will hold their Reorganizational Meeting on **Wednesday, April 28th**.

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Parents of students entering First Grade in the Milton Public Schools in the Fall of 2010 should be sure to attend Part II of Grade One Information Night on **April 14th** at 7pm in the Winchester Auditorium at MHS. Now that the World Language Committee has reported to the School Committee, additional information is available to parents who are deciding between programs.

Whether you attended the first session or not, this is an important meeting, as some of the parameters have changed. Also, please note that program selection is due by **April 30th**.

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The deadline for nominating an athlete for the Milton High Athletic Hall of Fame is **April 16th**. To nominate an athlete, pick up a form at any of the six Milton Public Schools, the town hall or download one from their website at:

http://www.edline.net/pages/Milton_Public_Schools/Milton_High_School_Athletic_Ha

Fundraising/Grant News

Many of you have seen the colorful sponsorship banners in our Copeland Field House at Milton High. It's not too late to purchase an outdoor banner for the 2010-2011 sports season. These banners will hang in the Copeland Field House for the season. For more information and pricing, please contact Kate Sumner kate@gofullcontact.com

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The Milton Public Schools will submit a Carol M. White Physical Education Program (PEP) grant proposal. Districts selected for PEP grants receive large, multi-year awards - usually in the range of \$300,000 per year for three years. A PEP grant would enable the Milton Public Schools to purchase new equipment and implement innovative programs that would improve student fitness, nutrition, wellness, and mastery of state physical education standards. Our proposal will seek to improve physical education by leveraging many underutilized resources in our community, and will feature multiple partnerships with local businesses and non-profit organizations.

We are also excited about a partnership between the Milton Public Schools, Milton Outdoor Classrooms and the New England Wildflower Society. NEWFS staff have tremendous expertise in the strategic use of native plants in landscaping - a key component of our Outdoor Classroom initiative. NEWFS has also run a successful program in environmental education in the Framingham Public Schools. Our organizations are taking a team approach toward developing infrastructure to support environmental education in our schools and sustaining the program over the long-term. We are optimistic that this partnership will help us to speed the growth of Outdoor Classrooms and open the door to several new funding sources.

PAC/Special Education News

- *"Lose the Training Wheels" Vacation Week April 19th -23rd*: Sponsored by the Milton Park and Recreation Department. The goal of this program is to teach youngsters with disabilities how to ride a bicycle. Participants must be at least 8 years old. **Volunteers** are especially needed. For more info or to volunteer, please contact Dave Perdios 617-898-4941; dperdios@townofmilton.org or download flyer and registration forms at: <http://www.miltonps.org/documents/MicrosoftWord-TrainingWheelsRegistrationPacket.pdf>.
- *Pierce "Roundtable" Monday April 26th @ 7pm*: Parents of Pierce students and incoming 6th graders, and all other interested parties are invited to attend a Special Education Roundtable Discussion on Monday April 26th at 7pm in the Pierce Library. The event is being co-sponsored by the PAC and the Milton Public Schools. Assistant Superintendent John Phelan, Director of Pupil/Personnel Services Jeff Rubin, and Pierce Principal James Jette will present an overview of current and future special education programs at the middle school. Parents are encouraged to attend, ask questions and share their experiences! Light refreshments will be served.
- *Special Education Parent Advisory Council (PAC) Board Elections May 3rd* The PAC is a group of volunteer parents working together and with the School Committee and Administration on behalf of students receiving special education services in Milton. The PAC is growing and needs your input and leadership in the coming year. If you'd like to get more involved and are interested in joining the PAC Board, please consider running for a Board position on May 3rd. Board positions include: Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and Members at large. Contact the PAC Election Coordinator, Chris Lenane at kevinchris3@verizon.net or 617-696-2549.

For more information about the PAC, please visit MiltonPAC.org or email MiltonPAC@yahoo.com

MFE News

Please look for the Milton Foundation for Education's Annual Appeal Letter, which will be mailed this month. This appeal funds creative and innovative Teacher Grants in every school, including such things as Robotics kits, Brain Bank books, Publisher's PENS project for aspiring authors, interactive globes and maps, and Cooperative Learning Centers. All this would not be possible without the incredible generosity of our supporters. To donate on-line, please visit the MFE website at

www.miltonfoundationforeducation.org

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As many of you may already know, the Milton Foundation for Education sponsors the annual Teacher of the Year ceremony. This is like the Oscars for our wonderful teachers! This year's ceremony will be held on **May 19, 2010**. Please make a note of this date.

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MHS Alumni Association

Recently, a meeting was held at the Milton Public Library to get the newly-formed Milton High Alumni Association off the ground. The meeting was well-attended and plans have been made to schedule future meetings for all who are interested. Dates and times for these meeting will be posted on the www.miltonps.org website and in this newsletter. In the meantime, the group posted a page to Facebook, which can be accessed by Facebook users by searching for “Milton High Alumni Association”.

Summer Programs

We are proud to offer Milton Summer Enrichment 2010. This is a summer program held from June 28th – July 30th at the Pierce Middle School. Courses are offered hourly and the program runs from 8am to noontime.

Please be aware that deadline for **mail-in registration is Friday, April 23rd**. **Final in-person registration for MSE will be Thursday, May 20th from 5-7pm** in the Milton High Lobby. For more information about Milton Summer Enrichment, contact Pam Dorsey at 617-696-5040 x5544 or email her at pdorsey@miltonps.org. You can also download the course catalogue at <http://www.miltonps.org/departments-summer.php>

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Registration is also underway for Camp Cunningham. This is a program based at Cunningham Elementary School with daily swimming in Cunningham Pool across the street. Camp Cunningham is a licensed full-day summer camp for students in Grades 1 – 8. Registration forms have been sent home with students and are due back with tuition deposits by **April 30th**. Spots are filling up, so if you are interested and have not yet registered, visit its site at: <http://www.miltoncommunityschools.org/index.htm>

Ambassador Page

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

Students: We would like to congratulate the following students who scored extremely well on their recent Latin Exams. On the **Latin I** Exams, taken by 7th and 8th graders, Michael Ricciuti earned a silver medal and a maxima cum laude (with the greatest praise) certificate; Brendan Hunt earned a cum laude (with praise) certificate; Kent Fong earned a cum laude certificate; Camden Brown earned a cum laude certificate; and Renee Chiu earned a cum laude certificate. On the **Introduction to Latin Exam** for sixth-graders, Simon Eder earned a ribbon and certificate for outstanding achievement; Jake Thornton earned a certificate for achievement. We are extremely proud of all these students for their hard work and dedication.

Teachers: I cannot say this too many times. Everyone who participated in the Faculty Talent Show is to be commended. This was a wonderful night – not just for fundraising, but also to show our community just how dedicated (and multi-talented) our teachers, administrators and staff are. Thanks to: Dr. Noreen Diamond Burdett, Gary Good and Rebecca Damiani Also, many thanks to Yolanda Beech, Vern Nelson, Tom Shaw, The Pierce Twisters, T.J. Russell, Dr. Sheila Walsh, Patricia Ostrem, Nancy Mikels, Michelle Kreuzer, MaryLou Markarian, Mary Ann Donnelly, Margaret Gibbons, Maggie Radley, Maggie Clark, Loyola Pasiewicz, Lisa Huban, Leonice Bernard, Laura Andrade, Kristin Masciarelli, Kathy Sullivan, Cassandra Derby and her sister; Karen Cahill, Kara Yifru, John Phelan, Dr. John Drottar, Joe O’Neill, Joao Costa, Jim Bowes, Jessica Parsons, Jeny Gonzalez, Jane Barrett, Gracie Burke, Grace Marinilli, Glenn Costa, Eileen Mullen, Dawn Sykes, Dan Jarboe, Conway Amar, Conner Joyce, Claude Bird, Brian Borde, Brendan Tobin, Beth Metzler, Barbara Wright, Barbara Plonski, Amy Starzynski and Amy Schabloski. We are also grateful for the “behind the scenes” work

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of Paul Ajemian, Paul Arenburg, Ken Aubert, Melissa Burns, Mary Colleary, Dyanne Crowley, Margaret Gibbons, Rich Guarino, Karen Hughes, Steve Collyer, Conner Desmond, Shelby Poon, Madeleine Brown, Erin Potter and Josh Burdett.

Volunteers: We would like to recognize the work of one of our parent volunteers, Dr. Angela Frederick Amar. As a Milton High parent, Dr. Amar helped our leadership team to administer the Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey to more than 300 students in grades seven, nine, and eleven. This survey is an instrument used by public schools across the nation to measure the major risk behaviors that threaten the health and safety of our young people. The Milton Public Schools will use these results to help inform health and wellness policy and programming decisions. This year, the Milton Public Schools partnered with Dr. Amar and her team of research assistants at Boston College who transformed the arduous task of tabulating 300 surveys (with 100 questions each) into a user-friendly online version that could be completed by students in fewer than 20 minutes. We are very grateful to Dr. Amar, PhD, RN, Associate Professor, Robert Wood Johnson Nurse Faculty Scholar at the William F. Connell School of Nursing at Boston College.