

Milton School Committee Meeting Minutes
Regular Meeting
Location: Glover Elementary School
Date: November 7, 2018
Time: 7 pm

Committee Present: Dr. Kevin Donahue, Chair; Sheila Varela, Vice Chair; Margaret Eberhardt, Dr. Elaine Craghead, Betty White, Ada Rosmarin.

Staff Present: Mary Gormley, Superintendent of Schools; Janet Sheehan, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Human Resources; Dr. Glenn Pavlicek, Assistant Superintendent for Business.

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 6:57 pm.

Approve November 7, 2018 Agenda

The agenda was approved with the following changes: The Finance Subcommittee Report will include a discussion of the FY20 budget, Ms. Varela will defer the Health and Wellness Advisory Committee reporting to the next meeting, which will occur on November 28, 2018, and the introduction of the Glover student guides was moved ahead of Citizen Speak.

Superintendent's Report:

Topic One: Glover Elementary School Site Council Report (Attachment):

What it means to be a Glover Kid:

Principal Karen McDavitt introduced the Glover Elementary 5th grade leaders. They each shared the qualities they believe students must possess to be a "Glover Kid", along with their favorite school subjects. The students then exited after the School Committee members thanked the children for leading the school tours that occurred prior to the start of the meeting. **The remainder of the report was then deferred until after Citizen Speak.**

Citizen Speak: Debbie Alsebai is part of the group, Courageous Conversations Toward Racial Justice. She came to announce the upcoming event *Conversation with Debbie Irving*. Debbie Irving will discuss her book *Waking up White: And Finding Myself in The Story of Race*. The event will take place on November 19, 2018 from 6-9pm at the Milton High School. She encouraged everyone to read the book.

Superintendent's Report:

Topic One: Glover Elementary School Site Council Report (Attachment): Principal McDavitt introduced a new initiative called PBIS: Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. PBIS seeks to teach behavioral expectations (What it means to be a "Glover Kid"), and gives students positive reinforcement when those behaviors are modeled by students. She showed a brief video that explained more about this project.

Principal McDavitt then introduced the members of the Glover Site Council. She reviewed the school profile, highlighting the growth of the student population and their participation in the STEP program. The STEP program provides curriculum for students with social emotional learning needs. This program allows the students to access the general curriculum along with their peers without being placed in a

separate classroom. Additionally, there is one co-taught classroom in each grade so that students who are on an IEP have more individualized attention.

Principal McDavitt shared the three 2017-2020 School Improvement Goals: Academic Achievement, School Climate and Culture, and Family and Community Engagement. She briefly summarized overall gains in MCAS scores from the previous testing year.

She emphasized the school's commitment to creating an environment where children feel "welcomed, supported, respected and appreciated". Encouraging diversity is a large part of this. She explained that one wildly successful initiative is the establishment of fourth and fifth grade Student Leaders. To be a Student Leader, the student must apply and have a formal recommendation from a school teacher. Once chosen, the Student Leaders are placed into teams and carry out special tasks, projects, and initiatives throughout the school and community. This gives the students leadership skills, confidence, and empowers them to know they can make a difference. Photos were then shown on screen of the safety patrol students, which is one role that the Student Leader can take on.

Principal McDavitt showed additional slides reflecting other activities led by student leaders. The Student Leader Fundraising Team held Pajama Day, where students paid for permission to wear their pajamas all day. The proceeds of this fundraiser (over \$1000) were given to Boston's Children Hospital. At Halloween, the students held a candy drive and students donated their candy to troops overseas – 476 pounds worth! The Student Leader School Spirit Team held a book character day and students dressed as their favorite book character. There were slides of the students and staff in their costumes, and pictures of morning greeters, which is another role for student leaders.

Regarding Family and Community Engagement, Principal McDavitt explained there is a new PTO position entitled Family and Community Liaison. The person in this new role organized the Treats for Troops Drive and is working on expanding the Thanksgiving food drive. The PTO will start their Holiday Gift Giving initiative soon. They recently participated in a project called *Jared Box* and another called *Giving Kids*, where students traveled to Boston and helped package boxes of new toys and other items for children in Hospice. The school has partnered with various Milton service agencies, including the Police and Fire Departments. Principal McDavitt recognized Sergeant Richman for helping children acclimate to the school environment, specifically one student who had a difficult time during a routine lock down drill in the school. Other examples included a parent that came in to teach students about 3D printers, a visit by author Darien Johnson, Monster Dash, Lantern Walk, and a Hotel Transylvania Movie Night. She announced that in response to student interest, a 3D printer was just donated to the school. Principal McDavitt feels all these initiatives keep the children and parents happy to be part of the school community and lead to increases in student achievement. This concluded the presentation and she opened the floor for questions.

Ms. Varela commented that student tour guides were well informed, well spoken, and that the students represent all of the school's values. She also commented that the school presentation was excellent. She asked whether there are additional aides or paraprofessionals in classes that have higher student volume. Principal McDavitt replied that aides and paraprofessional staff isn't added based on class size, but student need. For example, each kindergarten class has a 0.8 FTE paraprofessional for part of the day because this group needs additional support. Beyond kindergarten, the only classes with paraprofessional staff are classes that contain children on IEPs. Ms. Varela asked how many of the classes with 26 or more children have only one teacher. Principal McDavitt responded that these classes are typically the French Immersion courses and they do typically only have one teacher.

Dr. Craghead also extended thanks for her student tour guide and also expressed her gratitude for the hard work and dedication of the Glover staff.

Ms. White commented that the tour brought back memories for her because her son attended the school shortly after it was built. Her tour guide was enthusiastic about the school. She thanked the school site council and staff for their hard work.

Dr. Donahue asked if there are changes in policy that will help the school continue their work. The Site Council responded by explaining the continued support of the School Committee and the community at large is key.

Superintendent Gormley recognized Sara MacNeil, Glover Assistant Principal and Curriculum Coordinator, who is leading a professional development session for elementary school teachers tomorrow, which is an early release day for students. She asked Ms. MacNeil to explain more about what the session will include. Ms. MacNeil shared that she will introduce the second year of the Reach for Reading Program, which has a focus on written language. She will give an overview of the data that correlates specific Reach program benchmarks with MCAS scores. She will provide background information and research that supports the Reach program and explain why certain assessments are used as part of the program. They will explore areas that need attention, such as written language. She will present the plan for rolling out these assessments with students. Ms. Varela asked if we still have members from the program coming on site to assist and provide feedback. Ms. MacNeil responded by stating that this does occur and that according to program objectives, we are ahead of the program goals.

Assistant Superintendent Sheehan added that they have invited one of the authors of the program, Nancy Fry, to attend a professional development day. In the event this speaker is unable to do a site visit, they are also planning a webinar.

Superintendent Gormley added that the middle school will start using the same model, and that Principal Dr. Karen Spaulding is excited to have these outside experts assist in identifying programming that will challenge and help our students excel.

Ms. Rosmarin extended her thanks to the students and staff at Glover and congratulated the community on their accomplishments. She asked how the school is quantifying the success of SEL programming. Principal McDavitt responded by explaining that they are working with Laurie Stillman to compile surveys and metrics to measure the impact of SEL initiatives.

Dr. Donahue thanked Principal McDavitt and the Glover School Site Council for the presentation.

Topic Two: Happenings: Tomorrow is an early release day and a professional development day for elementary schools. Veterans Day is November 12th. In recognition of the holiday, there will be many assemblies and ceremonies in each school. The Milton High School will participate in the Town Hall ceremony at the end of the week. There will be a dedication to Milton veteran USMC Sgt John T. Carota, Silver Star recipient (posthumously) for Valor in Vietnam.

Ms. Varela announced that Collicott Elementary will hold the ten year anniversary kickoff of their *One Book, One School* program. This will be the final event for the program. This program was inspired by former Diversity Council leader Jennifer Kelly who passed away suddenly before she was able to institute the initiative in the schools. Each year in her honor a book is chosen that explores some sort of perspective or issue regarding diversity, and all children in the Collicot Elementary School are given a

copy of the chosen book to read. All classrooms then complete different projects based upon the ideas presented in the book. Later in the school year an “*Adventure Night*” is held with the theme of the book in mind. Fundraising efforts ensure that each child can obtain a copy of the year’s chosen book, and the author is invited to visit Milton to further discuss their book with the community if available. The event will be held next Friday night, November 16, at Venezia in Dorchester, and tickets will be available at the door.

Thanksgiving vacation is coming and will occur before the next School Committee meeting.

November 26, 2018 is the next installment of the Parent Speaker Series. We welcome Jessica Minahan, who will present a program entitled “Stressed Out! Reducing Anxiety in Children”. This will be held in the Milton High School Auditorium and will start at 6:30 pm.

There is a very important fundraiser happening this week at the Milton Fruit Center (11/5-11/11/18). All week twenty percent of your purchase goes to the school of your choice.

At the next meeting data specialist Vy Vu will present the district wide data presentation.

Superintendent Gormley explained that the student representatives will present the Happenings in the future. The sports update was then presented by student representative Ms. Lorden.

Athletic Update: The Wildcats football team is playing in the south sectional semifinals. If they win this Friday night, they have an opportunity to play at Gillette Stadium. The swim team has several students that will compete in the sectional tournament at MIT on Sunday, November 11th. The cross country will travel to Wrentham on Saturday for their regional meet. Winter registration is now open for winter sports, and tryouts will be held the Monday after Thanksgiving. There is a possibility the football game could be cancelled depending on the weather, and status updates will be posted on the Milton Public Schools website. The Milton High School Boosters recently met with the administration and they requested a brief athletic update from Stephanie O’Keefe, and this is in the works.

Milton School Committee Public Forum: Dr. Donahue asked if anyone has anything to add to a public forum discussion regarding increasing enrollment and the resulting space issue. No one came forward.

Chair’s Report:

Topic One: Approval of the Wilson-Kindelan Curriculum (Vote). Dr. Donahue stated that all required paperwork is in order.

Dr. Donahue made a motion to approve the operation of the Wilson-Kindelan School.

Second: Ms. Eberhardt

Abstain: Dr. Craghead.

Vote: 5-0-1

Ms. Eberhardt reminded the public that this approval is required under Massachusetts General Law; but that this is not an endorsement of the school. Ms. Rosmarin asked if this is the end of our relationship with the school, to which Dr. Donahue explained the School Committee is tasked with the permitting of private schools that open in the town and must also ensure these schools maintain their required certification(s). He explained that the role of the School Committee has been fulfilled in this matter, and he wishes the school and their students much luck in future endeavors.

Topic Two: Space and Facilities. Dr. Donahue will defer this discussion to the Facilities Subcommittee report.

Topic Three: Issue of Posting Subcommittees/Legal Response. Dr. Donahue gave a summary of this issue. He explained that the School Committee, as well as all subcommittee and advisory committees is governed by the Open Meeting Law. The School Committee does not want to create conflict, or the appearance of conflict with this law. He explained that the issue at hand is how we can permit members of the School Committee to attend the subcommittee and advisory committee meetings, as either a member of the public, or as School Committee members, without compromising adherence to the Open Meeting Law. These concerns were forwarded to Counsel for review; recommendations from Counsel were then forwarded to the Policy Subcommittee.

Dr. Craghead asked how we should navigate this issue until the Policy Subcommittee issues guidelines; specifically at meetings when a quorum of members wants to attend. Dr. Donahue responded by explaining that Counsel presented two options – either the meeting can be posted as a School Committee meeting; in which case the meeting must proceed as a School Committee meeting; or the meeting is not posted as such and if School Committee members attend then they can do so as a member of the public only (and therefore cannot vote).

Dr. Craghead asked for clarification on what exactly this means during the meeting. Dr. Donahue explained that the easiest way to avoid conflict is to treat meetings that are cross posted as School Committee meetings as such. If the meeting is not cross posted, participation of attending members of the School Committee would depend on the structure of the meeting. This means that anyone can share during the Citizens Speak portion of the agenda or if at any point open questions from the public are taken. His suggestion is to put Citizens Speak on the agenda until this all gets sorted out.

Ms. Varela asked Ms. Eberhardt if she would prefer to report on this matter now or during her reporting for the Policy Subcommittee portion of the agenda. The group decided to defer the Finance Subcommittee Report to let the Policy Subcommittee discuss this now.

Policy Subcommittee Report: Ms. Eberhardt explained that the issue of cross posting meetings as School Committee meetings may exclude some members from participating in discussions and being involved in voting decisions. Citizens Speak parameters will be reviewed with the legal team and there may be changes in policy in the future. Dr. Donahue expressed the same view.

The Policy Subcommittee has been reviewing and updating all policies and Ms. Eberhardt plans to ask at the next meeting that some outdated policies are removed. Charlene Roche has been updating the online policy manual. There was a suggestion from a community member regarding the possibility of a fragrance free policy. Ms. Varela will look into whether other school districts have instituted a fragrance free policy. The policy regarding the Student Council Representative is being reviewed and may need to be changed. Ms. Varela will report back on this in the future.

Finance Subcommittee Report

Topic One: First Quarter Report (Attachment) (Vote).

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Pavlicek explained that the first quarter report is in the same format used for last several years, with some changes as necessary. Salary lines are where they should be. Expenditure lines are heavily spent, which is appropriate as educational materials are purchased prior to the start of the school year and this is reflected on the report. Special education and transportation

costs are somewhat unclear moving forward but additional funds have been set aside in anticipation of future costs. Encumbering salaries is a good idea in theory but difficult to apply in the public school setting, but possible. The challenge is the fact that staffing needs change daily.

Dr. Craghead made a motion to approve the first quarter report as presented.

Second: Ms. Rosmarin

Vote: 6-0-0

Topic Two: Approval of Vendor warrants (Attachment) (Vote)

Dr. Craghead made a motion to approve Vendor Warrant # 16 dated October 25, 2018 in the amount of \$284,407.23.

Second: Ms. Rosmarin

Abstain: Ms. White

Vote: 5-0-1

Dr. Craghead made a motion to approve vendor warrants number #17 and #18. Vendor warrant #17 is dated November 1, 2018 in the amount of \$233,468.40. Vendor warrant #18 is dated November 8, 2018 in the amount of \$228,508.04.

Second: Ms. Varela

Vote: 6-0-0

Topic Three: Discussion of potential items for inclusion FY20 budget (Slide show). Dr. Pavlicek explained that there are nine items above and beyond level funding for the fiscal year 20 budget. The School Committee is tasked with determining which of these should be included in the FY20 budget. The items are as follows:

Elementary School Teacher. The first item is an elementary school teacher. Due to our increasing enrollment, this is deemed a dire need that should be included in the budget. Other items on the list are items that are necessarily absolute needs.

Assistant Director of Special Education was discussed next. This position used to exist within the district but was eliminated previously due to budget cuts. The addition of this position was previously recommended by outside review of Milton special education programs, but unable to be restored due to budgetary restrictions. It is being brought forth once more for potential inclusion.

Special Education Specialist. Dr. Pavlicek discussed the need to add a Special Education Specialist for the language based special education program. The addition of this role would prevent students having to go outside the district for specialized instruction. Ms. White asked that we explain for the viewers to clarify what exactly the needs are for this student population. Assistant Superintendent Sheehan explained that these students must have focused education in smaller groups due to their disability. Superintendent Gormley expressed that we want all the children who live in this town to be able to access the public schools.

BRYT Program Support Staff. There is a proposal to add additional staff to support the BRYT program. This program is common in high schools and provides support for students returning from extended absences. The staffing for the program will include a mixture of teachers and counselors. For now, however, the addition of only one teacher would enable the high school to initiate this program.

Preschool Coordinator – The Preschool Coordinator would oversee the preschool programs, evaluate staff, align curriculum, and act as a liaison for the Early Intervention Program. This is considered a priority position of the system.

High School Educators (2). English Teacher and a Math/Science teacher. This will enable a reduction in class size in these heavily tested areas.

Additional Recess Aides. Additional recess aides are needed due to the increase in enrollment. The goal is to add one to each school, for three hours a day. Each aide working 15 hours a week will cost \$9,000 annually.

Additional School Bus. We were unable to provide busing to 15 Milton students needing a bus service. Assistant Superintendent Dr. Pavlicek added that this is a potential policy issue – what will our policy be in the future for busing? The addition of one bus will cost \$71,000, partially offset by new fees charged to riders.

Ms. Varela questioned whether we have accurate enrollment forecasting to assess whether we need more than one elementary teacher. Assistant Superintendent Dr. Pavlicek says we in fact may need more than one elementary school teacher. Superintendent Gormley added that preschool registration will start over a month earlier than previous years so we can have a better understanding of expected enrollment. Ms. Varela feels it will be compelling to have this data so we will know how class size will be affected, and how many teachers we may need.

Ms. Varela inquired how long ago the district employed an Assistant Director of Special Education; this was almost two decades ago. Superintendent Gormley explained that each department has a department head, with the exception of the Special Education Department. An assistant would provide more support for all the teachers throughout the district.

Dr. Donahue reminds everyone that this was an item recommended in the last audit. He added that every recommendation we follow allows us to be in a better place for the next audit. Additionally, we should make sure that we provide enough support that we do not burn out our current talent. Dr. Craghead also agrees. She also emphasized this position addresses a number of priorities.

Ms. White explained that there are a number of staff evaluations that are required; this takes a lot of time. She believes the addition of this position is very important.

Ms. Varela asked whether the \$20,000 fee would be a yearly fee or an amount that will be collected only once. Dr. Craghead responded that this is a one-time fee.

Ms. Varela asked about the BRYT program staffing and structure. If we have approval for one full time teacher, how would that staff be assigned and distributed? Superintendent Gormley will review this with Principal Jette.

Ms. Varela asked for clarification regarding the Math/Science teacher. Superintendent Gormley explained that the FTE allotment will be split between the Math and Science teachers. For example, there may be a 0.5 Math, 0.5 Science teacher based on enrollment needs.

Ms. Rosmarin commented that she isn't sure the addition of one teacher will be enough; projections for future kindergarten enrollment are high. Secondly, she believes the BRYT program should be a priority. She wonders whether the preschool coordinator needs to be a full time position. Perhaps this should be combined with a kindergarten coordinator so that the curriculum is aligned. Dr. Craghead responded

that in finance this position was approved for 0.5 FTE, but that there was discussion back and forth as to whether the position should be 0.5 or 1.0 FTE.

Ms. Eberhardt thinks that this should be allotted 1.0 FTE if it includes kindergarten assessments of kindergarten teachers.

Dr. Donahue commented that special education preschool is a specialized population, and their ability to transition to kindergarten requires attention.

There was then discussion about how many of these nine items should be presented for inclusion in the FY20 budget, and how the School Committee should determine which items to ask for. Dr. Craghead asked members to rank the items and we will discuss this next meeting.

There was discussion regarding the addition of one additional school bus. Ms. Eberhardt thinks this is an important issue to help parents get children to school. Transportation is hard for families, and we should heavily consider this.

Dr. Donahue reinforced this view, but added the cost of this bus is the same cost as a teacher. So this is something to consider as well.

Ms. Varela commented that everything on this list is needed in response to increasing enrollment. In order to maintain the quality of education, costs will naturally increase.

Dr. Craghead commented on the lunch and recess aides. She emphasized that this is a safety and liability issue, and may be money well spent.

Facilities Advisory Committee

Ms. Rosmarin reported that Dr. Pavlicek has reviewed the NESDEC methodology, which gives projections of future enrollment. It seems that the data used is sound, but the Facilities Advisory Committee is wondering if we should seek a second opinion prior to bringing this forward to the Town Meeting in 2019. We have a name of another company who has given a quote of approximately \$7,200.00 to perform this assessment.

Dr. Donahue feels we should first determine definitively whether we need a second opinion. If we determine this is necessary, we should then consider when the appropriate time would be to pursue this.

Dr. Craghead explained this was discussed at the Finance Subcommittee. She thinks we should wait until after the facilities study comes back. Ms. White feels that if we have accurate numbers for the Town Meeting they may more quickly move forward with actions to put forth a building committee.

Ms. Varela feels we have a very solid Facilities Advisory Subcommittee and she isn't sure if we need an additional building committee. She did express that this is an urgent issue.

Ms. Rosmarin says we should then wait on seeking a second opinion. Dr. Donahue also thinks we have a compelling argument even without a second opinion.

Ms. Rosmarin distributed copies of the Facilities goal, which would be included as part of the Strategic Plan. There are three objectives; one to address classrooms, one to ensure the facilities are adequate

for education, and one to ensure proper maintenance of facilities. There was a recent addition to objective 6.3 regarding sustainability; to achieve this goal would likely require a sustainability task force.

Ms. Varela asks what the immediate goals of the subcommittee are to address the town's increasing enrollment. Ms. Rosmarin responded that we are not yet equipped to draft these until we have the facilities study completed.

Transportation and Traffic Advisory Committee:

Ms. White presented updates. The focus of their last meeting was regarding traffic issues at Glover Elementary. Judith Crocker spoke at the recent PTO meeting. She reviewed the results from a recent survey and educated parents about the traffic issues at Glover. Parents are hesitant to use the buses. Parents are the main source of traffic at the school. A document entitled "15 Reasons to Take the Bus" was given to the principal for distribution to the parents. One item that may persuade parents to use the bus is the fact that bus technology has changed. Some buses will now be equipped with trackers which may make things easier and parents more willing to have their children take the bus. Other changes will include improved signage at school, increased use of signs that light up, increased in bike racks, etc.

Approval of Minutes

The Chair made a motion to approve the minutes of September 26, 2018

Second: S. Varela

Vote: 6-0-0

The Chair made a motion to approve the minutes of October 3, 2018.

Second: E. White

Abstain: A. Rosmarin

Vote: 5-0-1

The Chair made a motion to approve the minutes of October 16, 2018.

Second: E. Craghead

Abstain: A. Rosmarin and K. Donahue

Vote: 4-0-2

Old business

Dr. Craghead will be the sole delegate to the MASC convention which starts tomorrow.

Citizen Speak Topic Response

Not applicable

Next meeting agenda Items

The next meeting will be held at the high school. The goal statement of the Facilities Advisory Subcommittee will be discussed. There will be a data presentation with Vy Vu.

The Chair entertained a motion to adjourn.

Second: S. Varela

Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0

Adjourn 10:25 pm