

Milton School Committee Meeting Notes
Milton High School Site Council
Location: Milton Access TV Studio
Date: October 17 2018
Time: 7 pm

Committee Present: Dr. Kevin Donahue, Chair; Sheila Varela, Vice Chair; Margaret Eberhardt, Betty White, Ada Rosmarin Dr. Elaine Craghead was not in attendance.

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 by Dr. Donahue at 7:05pm.

Approve October 17, 2018 Agenda

Ms. Varela would like to discuss open subcommittee meetings under the Chair's Report. The agenda was approved with this addition.

Citizen Speak: Dr. Donahue explained the purpose of Citizen Speak and invited anyone to come forward. There were no items brought forth.

Superintendent's Report:

Topic One: Guests of the Superintendent

Milton High School students performed scenes from the production Les Miserables. The show times are as follows: Thursday, November 1st at 7pm; Saturday November 3rd at 2pm and 7pm; Sunday November 4th at 2pm.

Topic Two: Milton High School (MHS) Site Council Report (Attachment)

James Jette, Principal of Milton High School, introduced the members of the MHS Site Council and presented the Milton High School Site Council Report. This report included general assessment data (full reports will be available in November to share), athletic highlights, and achievements of students involved in performance and fine arts. Principal Jette recognized educator Kara Yifru, who was chosen as a recipient of the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. Several new initiatives were reviewed, such as the elimination of class rank, BYOD (Bring your own device), chemical health awareness, the addition of financial literacy courses to the curriculum, and efforts to encourage early consideration of college by utilizing virtual tours. Principal Jette shared with parents the new Massachusetts school attendance requirement, which states that students may not miss more than 10% of the school year for any reason. He informed everyone that additional morning and afternoon study sessions have been added to the school day so students with varying schedules can have the opportunity to attend study sessions if they desire. He highlighted major initiatives that are ongoing, such as efforts to increase technology in the classrooms, provide increased awareness and

prevention of substance abuse, and to incorporate social emotional learning (SEL) strategies into the high school curriculum.

Principal Jette provided a summary of Professional Learning Communities. These professional development sessions are held for the staff and are taught by the staff on the following topics: Best practices, cultural competencies, growth mindset, Social Emotional Learning (SEL), and technology. He emphasized the school's ongoing commitment to diversity, which includes curriculum enhancements, the development of a diversity committee, cultural competency training, Citizens for a Diverse Milton, and the various students groups and organizations that support a diverse population within the school and beyond.

Each site council member spoke about their experiences within the Milton Public School System.

The School Committee decided to break for the public forum before continuing with the Milton High School Field Trip Approval.

Milton School Committee Public Forum

Dr. Donahue encouraged audience members to bring forth discussion regarding pertinent issues that affect the high school community.

Topic One: Sports and Clubs: Tricia Poles, who has 3 of her 5 children enrolled in Milton Public Schools, expressed disappointment by the lack of club level sport activity to provide a low pressure, noncompetitive opportunity for students to engage in physical activity. She added that her son is interested in chess and robotics and there are no clubs for him to participate in. Principal Jette responded by thanking Tricia for her comments and expressing that he regrets that she feels this way. He explained that the high school does offer a "Step Up Day" to prepare students for the high school experience. He explains that clubs are developed based upon student interest; the school is open to starting new clubs. Ms. Varela and Principal Jette and other council members explained that there are intramural sports, that a robotics team just started this week, and that there is another team recently started that incorporates chess as well. Information about these clubs will be sent to this parent directly.

Topic Two: Class size (attachment): Dr. Pavlicek circulated a document with data regarding the number of classes with enrollment greater than 28 students. He explained that there are 47 classes that meet the criteria – 9 out of the 32 Advanced Placement classes (just over 25% of AP courses); 15 of 78 core courses (approximately 19% of core classes). He stated that the rest of classes are electives (French Immersion, Tech Essentials), or fall into class types that have expected larger enrollment such as band, chorus and physical education. Ms. Varela expressed concern that the honors classes have high numbers. Principal Jette expressed thanks the staff for their tireless efforts to provide programming despite increasing enrollment. He pointed out that some of the overcrowded classes arise when students drop into lower level courses after the school year starts. These changes disrupt the class schedules that are constructed over the summer and create unanticipated imbalances in class size. The

school takes placement suggestions from teachers, but they also feel it important to allow parents to override these decisions to allow for placement into higher level course. Often students then decide to change and drop to lower levels course after the school years starts, creating unplanned additions to classes and results in larger class sizes. Superintendent Gormley reminded everyone that there are active budget proposals by the Finance Subcommittee to hire another English teacher, an additional math/science teacher, as well as an administration proposal. This would create the ability to open additional history and English classes to help mitigate this concern. Dr. Donahue added that this is an example of how we are seeing the effect of the increasing enrollment. He expressed appreciation for the continued encouragement of the individual paths of the student by providing the choice over course selection.

Ms. White asked Principal Jette to explain the effects of the override on staffing. He responded that they were able to appoint a 0.5 FTE adjustment counselor and a 0.5 FTE guidance counselor. In addition, they were able to reduce fees for students to participate in sports. Most fees were reduced by 50%. Ms. Varela asked about the class sizes in college preparatory courses. Principal Jette replied by saying that the class sizes are larger in these classes as well. Principal Jette explained that he reviewed class size of other school districts and he explained that sometimes other districts place a cap on class size at 15 students in college preparatory courses. He explained that many of the smaller classes are special education classes and that because of the strict regulations about staffing for special education classes, student to teacher ratios must be upheld and require a large percentage of the schools teachers.

Ms. Varela asked about leveling and presented the idea of whether there should be attempts made to place students in leveled courses to change class size (for example having English courses 1, 2, and 3; based upon student ability). Principal Jette responded by saying this does exist currently in some form.

Parent Tricia Poles asked whether encouraging children to enroll in college level Advanced Placement (AP) courses threatens their individual development overall. Principal Jette responded by saying that his job is to support students and their aspirations to allow them to flourish; he feels this does support the individual development of each student. He also pointed out the parent role and ability to override specific courses on behalf of the student. He emphasized the importance of Social Emotional Learning being integrated into the entire school day. Ms. Eberhardt explained that elimination of class rank was an attempt to take some of this academic pressure off of students. Lastly, Superintendent Gormley added that the school is an academic institution and that she will strive to maximize educational opportunities for all students.

Superintendent's Report, continued:

Topic Three: Milton High School Field Trip Approval (Attachment) (Vote): Kathleen Kelly requested the approval of the proposal for the Milton High School field trip to Europe. A preliminary proposal was previously submitted and approved by Principal Jette. She was seeking approval from the School Committee so that fundraising efforts can be initiated.

Dr. Donahue moved to vote in support of this proposal.

Second: Ms. Varela.

Vote: 5-0-0

Topic Four: Happenings. Student representative Sophia Manning presented the Happenings for athletics. MHS football team played against Needham High School in a huge game with conference and playoff implications and won 22 to 14. One game is left before the playoffs. The MHS swim team record is now 4 wins, 1 loss after triumphing over Framingham's team for the first time in history. Sophia explained she was pleased to announce that two students are currently committed to attend and play sports at Division 1 colleges in the fall, and there are two additional students that have options to attend as well. We can find out on signing day, November 9th, which schools they will all be attending. She also reminded everyone that registration for winter sports starts on November first, with tryouts beginning on the Monday after Thanksgiving. Lastly, Grace Dwyer and Miguel Varela won Athlete of the Month for their participation in the cross country and soccer teams, respectively.

Chair's Report

Topic One: Approval of the Wilson-Kindelan Curriculum (Vote): Ms. Eberhardt explained that we are not yet ready to vote. She received pictures from community members indicating that the school appeared to be operational without having approval from the School Committee, which is required prior to school operation. One missing item was the fire inspection. Upon further discussion with the town, the school staff and the church, the church's Pastor explained that there was a misunderstanding regarding the process and paperwork that was required to be received by the School Committee. Ms. Eberhardt proposed we should have the staff come to the next meeting with all their required paperwork. At that time the School Committee could make a final decision about operation of the Wilson-Kindelan School. Dr. Donahue reminded everyone that the School Committee is essentially a licensing committee for new private schools. He reviewed the requirements that the school must meet. It appears that all but one of the items (certificate of occupancy) has been satisfied. He expressed that this has been a lengthy process at times exacerbated by a minimal degree of contact with those involved. He wishes the school lots of luck and much academic success to their students. Dr. Donahue said he planned to hold a vote on approval as soon as the certificate of occupancy is received. This may mean the School Committee takes the vote prior to our specially scheduled meeting at Town Hall with the Select Board, which is the next scheduled meeting. The other members were in agreement.

Topic Two: Discussion of the Open Meeting Law: Ms. Varela wants the ability to attend and take part in the subcommittees and advisory committee meetings, specifically the facilities meetings. She feels the School Committee board members should be able to hear and participate in the discussion regarding issues that will later presented to the School Committee board. She believes this will give better background and understanding of important issues. To that end, cross posting Advisory Committee meetings as School Committee meetings would permit any member of the board to attend and participate in the discussions held without the School Committee being in violation of the Open Meeting Law. Ms. White asked if it has been common practice for all committee members to attend subcommittee meetings. Dr. Donahue explained that the Finance Subcommittee meetings have

historically been cross posted as School Committee meetings so that members can attend and participate in discussions regarding budget. Assistant Superintendent Pavlicek agreed with this. He added that one issue that arises with having meetings cross posted is regarding voting quorum. He explained if there are enough School Committee board members voting such that a quorum is reached on a vote at a subcommittee meeting, it will then might not be referred to the School Committee board. In theory, this could potentially be used as a way to subvert issues from being brought to the televised public sessions and also to keep all School Committee board members from voting. As such cross posting must be done in a way so as to avoid the appearance of impropriety and exclusion of other School Committee members in voting. Ms. Eberhardt feels that attendance at certain subcommittee meetings is important. Ms. Varela pointed out the cons of the Open Meeting Law. Dr. Donahue reminded the group of the consequences of violation. Ms. White added that having full School Committee members present at meetings can change the dynamics of the meeting. Ms. Varela respectfully disagrees with this. Superintendent Gormley proposed a compromise – posting particular meetings as full on a one time only basis. Dr. Donahue agrees this is possible solution; however, he is hesitant to deviate too much from current practice, as it has been vetted by counsel as compliant with the Open Meeting Law, and further is hesitant to overrule the desires of the Subcommittee and Advisory Committee chairs. Ms. Eberhardt brought up the idea of changing the current limit of two board members on Subcommittees/Advisory Committees so that up to three members can potentially attend. Dr. Donahue indicated he was willing to do so if that is the will of the entire School Committee but reminded individuals it may result in members being reassigned or dropped from subcommittees and may present a problem with quorums as both members would have to be present to constitute a quorum with two-member only subcommittees preventing a meeting from taking place if one was ill or had a schedule conflict.

Finance Subcommittee Report

Ms. Eberhardt presented a brief update in Dr. Craghead's absence. She explained that the Glover and Pierce Schools made their presentation to the Finance Subcommittee regarding the needs of these schools as they pertain to budget. The Collicot and Cunningham Schools will be the final schools to present and will do so at the next meeting of this subcommittee. Next, there will be a presentation by the district before determining which items to place on the agenda for voting.

Topic One: Approval of Vendor Warrants (Vote): Dr. Eberhardt moved to approve vendor warrant #15, dated 10/18/18 in the amount of \$628,989.39.

Second: Dr. Donahue

Abstain: White

Vote: 4-0-1

Strategic Planning Advisory Committee Report

Topic One: Strategic Plan update. Member Rosmarin relayed that this committee met this morning. They have decided moving forward to meet on a quarterly basis now that the strategic plan was completed this past June. Upcoming meetings will occur in January, March and May of 2019. Today each task force (Social Emotional Learning, Cultural Competency, Curriculum and Instruction, Data Use,

Technology) presented updates on each initiative to the committee. There are highlights of these presentations that are available for review and member Rosmarin will send copies of this to the School Committee members. They also reviewed a draft of the Facilities Goal and they shared their feedback on this proposal.

Facilities Advisory Committee Report

Topic One: The Facilities Study proposal from DRA was reviewed. They will ask for a revised report that includes additional information such as the amount of time to be spent in each area, as well as a breakdown regarding cost. The subcommittee also wants this proposal to address the middle and high schools; DRA has agreed to include both in their study within the existing price structure. The committee is currently waiting for this updated proposal which will include a timeline of each school site visit. As soon as this is received the schools will be notified.

Topic Two: Goal and objective statement for the Facilities Advisory Committee. The current goal statement contains an objective that they seek to provide “sufficient dedicated classroom space for our expanding enrollment. “ In the Strategic Planning meeting members pointed out that the need for accommodating our expanding enrollment includes consideration of areas other than classroom space alone. Therefore, this language will be revised and brought back to the committee for approval. In addition, a clause will be added regarding how we will address sustainability as part of the Facilities Goal. Once they have finalized these items, the final draft will be brought forth to the Facilities Advisory Committee for approval.

Topic Three: Member Rosmarin presented to the Facilities Advisory Committee a one paged document that she developed with the Communications Director. The goal of this document is to make information about Milton Public Schools’ increasing enrollment and the resulting space needs more clear to the public so this issue can be addressed within the community at large. The Committee feedback was that the page had too much information on it to be easily understood, but that this is a good rough draft. The document will be revised.

Health and Wellness Advisory Committee Report

Ms. Varela shared that the 1st meeting occurred in September. This consisted of many back to school updates from committee members in the areas we serve.

Topic One: An update on health activities was presented by Noel Vigue, Physical Health and Education Director. At the elementary level he is working on increasing physical education to twice a week. He is working on adding puberty and life skills to the fourth and fifth grade curriculum. For sixth grade, he is adding opioid and vaping curriculum, along with heart rate monitors. At the high school level, updates will include opioid and vaping curriculum additions, along with conflict resolution. Otherwise, in regular gym classes he is starting to incorporate more general physical activity that is more in line with national standards and that will focus on giving students the life skills to keep in shape beyond their school years.

Topic Two: Food Service Director Jackie Morgan introduced her new intern Sara. They reported on the Food Service work being done at Tucker Elementary. They recently debuted breakfast for grades three, four, and five on the “Tucker Trolley”, a cart that travels though the school. This has been a big success. They have also purchased smoothies bikes. With the smoothie bikes, you can make your smoothie and ride at the same time.

Topic Three: Laurie Stillman, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Facilitator, along with Noel Vigue, gave a professional education session for promoting SEL learning in the classroom. For high school students they brought performances of “Drug Story Theater”, performed by a group that aims to educate students regarding drug use in a theater format. Additionally, the SEL team will be meeting the end of September to prepare for implementation of the new SEL assessments that will be done later this year.

Topic Three: Caroline Kinsella and Laurie Stillman are both working with substance abuse regional collaborative. Underage drinking is this group’s focus for the year, and it is also a key initiative of the Health and Wellness Advisory Committee. Caroline and Laurie gave the advisory committee a look at the website “Rethink the Drinks” which encourages better choices around the consumption of alcohol. The advisory committee gave their suggestions regarding new logos for messaging that may be sent out. They met with Chief King to discuss the underage drinking initiative and the lack of punishment by the police in Milton. He has said they will become stricter in their enforcement of underage drinking laws, and he agreed to come towards the end of November with updates. Plans for the next meeting include the following: update on the Take 5 room by Principal Jette, BRYT program, updates about our programs for underage drinking, assessment of the progress of the “Wait Until 8th” campaign, updates from the middle school and elementary school principals, along with continued goal setting for the rest of the school year.

Approval of minutes

Dr. Donahue moved to approve the minutes of September 5, 2018

Second: Member White

Abstain: Members White and Rosmarin

Vote: 3-0-2

Old business- n/a

Citizen Speak Topic Response – n/a

Next meeting agenda items

Dr. Donahue reminded everyone of the 11/7/18 Glover site visit. On November 28, 2018 there will be a district wide data presentation.

Citizen Speak – n/a

Meeting adjourned

Dr. Donahue moved to adjourn the School Committee meeting at 9:43 pm.

Second: Ms. Varela

Vote: 5-0-0

Meeting adjourned at 9:43 pm.