

**Milton School Committee Meeting  
Via Remote Access  
August 13, 2020**

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

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

**(Conducted pursuant to the Executive Order dated March 12, 2020 suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, Gen. L. c. 30A §20 et seq. and 940 CMR 29.01 et seq.)**

1. **Call to order** - 7:04pm
2. **Approve August 13, 2020 Agenda**  
Updated and approved
3. **Superintendent's Report – Superintendent Mary Gormley**
  - a. **Fall Reopening Comprehensive Plan Presentation**
    - Superintendent Mary Gormley
    - Dr. Karen Spaulding, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Human Resources
    - Dr. Glenn Pavlicek, Assistant Superintendent for Business
    - Principal James Jette, Milton High School
    - Principal William Fish, Pierce Middle School
    - Principal Dr. Elaine McNeil-Girmai, Tucker Elementary
    - Principal Karen McDavitt, Glover Elementary
    - Principal Dr. Jonathan Redden, Cunningham Elementary
    - Principal Holly Concannon, Collicot Elementary
    - Susan Maselli, Director of Pupil Personnel Services
    - Kim Coughlin, Head Nurse
    - Zeina Hamada, Foreign Language

The recommendation by Superintendent Gormley to the Milton School Committee was the Hybrid/Remote Learning Choice Model. Superintendent Gormley stated:

- Regardless of which choice is made within the Hybrid/Remote Learning Choice Model, students will engage in learning that will foster the development of critical skills, work toward understanding key grade level ideas and concepts, provide regular and predictable opportunities for students to connect with classmates and their teacher, and to be rooted in best practices.
- Milton Public Schools Comprehensive School Reopening Plan will be submitted to MA DESE by 5:00pm on August 14, 2020.
- Milton Public School Comprehensive School Reopening Plan distributed to all stakeholders August 14, 2020.
- If the recommendation is approved, Parents/guardians will receive a form to be completed for each child in the family. This form will ask parents/guardians to communicate which choice-Hybrid Choice Model or Full Remote Choice Model they want for each child (can be different choice for each child).
- Teachers will be asked to indicate their preference for fall 0Hybrid or Remote so that they can be considered for one or the other.

Superintendent Gormley thanked all who were involved in the Return to School Plan. Milton Public Schools will be committed to every child and family in to make this plan work.

Chair Varela asked the School Committee if they had any questions about the recommendation.

Ms. Eberhardt thanked all for the presentation. She asked if the High School AP classes both Hybrid and Remote classes will be taught by Milton Public School teachers.

Mr. Jette stated that for the record he couldn't guarantee at this time and that MHS would be using the state platform guidelines. Depends on how many teachers respond to return to school survey and also how many students chose to go remote. The Hybrid Model the plan is to offer all classes. There may be some cases that there will not be enough teachers available. Teachers need to be certified in classes, not the same format as the elementary school.

Ms. White stated that she has received a number of emails and thanked everyone for writing about their concerns. Having worked in elementary schools for the past twenty years, she stated she understands the importance of school. She stated she misses seeing and interacting with students in person. This is a very important and difficult decision. The number one concern is the health and safety of the children, families and staff at the Milton Public

School. This virus is very dangerous and contagious. Children do get sick and could infect others. Ms. White stated that she personally felt that opening the school at his time would not be safe. Ms. White stated that she supported the Remote Learning Program taught by the Milton Public School faculty.

Ms. Eberhardt had a question about the elementary school curriculum, when back in session will there be focus on the social and emotional curriculum, addressing the school closure, the time away and what has happened. Will you talk about their experiences?

Dr. Elaine McNeil-Girmai replied that Tucker Elementary will definitely be addressing students and discussing safety. She stated that Tucker will focus on the social and emotional learning working with our Adjustment Counselors and how to maximize resources to provide support.

Ms. Concannon replied that faculty was quick to adjust in March when school ended abruptly. Adjustment Counselors, School Psychologists and faculty made themselves available to support students and their families. In the fall Collicot will continue to provide support with the return to school and to make sure all children feel safe.

Ms. White commented that several parents have asked if they start out in the remote model can they transfer to the Hybrid what is the flexibility.

Mr. Jette replied that if you start out remote and a few weeks in decide to request Hybrid it could take a few more weeks to add into the schedule due to social distancing and how many students are in the classes. It will take time because of safety reasons. It may be easier to transition into remote from Hybrid.

Chair Varela asked Mr. Jette about the possibility of students not having MPS teachers when choosing remote. Mr. Jette stated that MHS will try to run all 21 AP courses but it will all depend on the teacher's availability to teach. We may need to hire additional staff.

Chair Varela asked Superintendent Gormley, if a family needs to complete the choice form to decide if their child will be attending MPS Hybrid or Remote, what is the deadline for the form to be submitted?

Superintendent Gormley replied that the choice forms will be emailed on August 14, 2020. Administration is asking families to submit by Monday, August 17th. So then schedules and assignments can be created.

Chair Varela asked Zeina Hamada can you speak about the Foreign Language programs. Ms. Hamada replied that she has received a lot of emails about the French Immersion Program, asking if French will still be taught and yes it will be. Instruction will be taught in French, grade levels may vary. 1st grade will look different and will be more bilingual. The class will be at a slower pace. Spanish and Latin teachers are committed to use both models and the languages will still be very strong in the Milton Public Schools.

Ms. Eberhardt asked about the information that is out there about the health and safety plans.

Dr. Spaulding replied that PPE, masks and physical space, signage in the hallways. Each principal has mapped out school space plans. More information is available online on the return to school website including all the surveys. Remote teacher mentors available to provide support; want to stay connected to all families.

Mr. Jette reported that 24 High School teachers have taken professional development classes on cultural competency. He reported that he has been meeting with parents and students of color to get their views on the back to school and how MPS can be supportive.

Ms. McDavitt commented that the greatest example of equity is offering the Choice option with MPS educators. Students are important and connected to the MPS, valued in the classroom and community. All deserve to feel connected and supported.

Dr. Elaine McNeil-Girmai commented that having a choice with these two models is the most equitable option to families, understanding that families have a difficult decision to make. All materials will be made available to all families.

Mr. Fish stated that MPS will be able to support families who struggled in the spring with remote learning.

Ms. Rosmarin thanked everyone involved in the Back to School Plan and for all the effort.

Chair Varela thanked all parents and guardians for all of the emails, and all those who were involved in these Back to School Plans. Hope everyone has grace with the decision made,

and chooses what is best for their families. This will be a tough year for everyone and we all have to work together and support each other.

#### **4. Citizen Speak (Policy BEDH-30 minutes)**

Chair Varela made a motion to extend Citizen Speak to 45 minutes.

Second: Ms. White

Vote: 6-0-0

#### **Nora Harrington - 124 Canton Ave**

- Thanked School Committee and Administration for all the work
- Speaking on behalf of Special Education Advisory Council
- Read the letter that was submitted to the School Committee to support the return to school in person model
- Support the Hybrid Model

#### **Lee Ivers – 4 Hutchinson Street**

- Thanked everyone for all the hard work
- Infectious disease specialist, Professor of Medicine
- Parent of two children
- Urge the Committee to vote in favor of the Hybrid/Remote Choice
- Believe it is possible to safely return to school
- Would like to see more information shared with families about working with the board of health and testing strategies, perhaps routine testing
- What exactly will happen when somebody does test positive, what is the plan

#### **Beverly Ross Denny - Columbine Road**

- 14 year nephew from NYC had Covid and was very sick
- What is the legal liability of the town in the event that somebody contracts the virus and either passes away or has permanent health complications

#### **Crystal Deas – 62 Harold Street**

- To reference Beverly Ross Denny comment about liability, will the town be responsible or will you throw it back at the parent because they made the choice?
- Would like more information about teachers, will there be Milton Teachers for the remote plan and not just busy work

#### **Meg and Scott Matthews – Cheever Street**

- Thankful for all involved

- Request that school leaders can the school be providing information. What exactly will in school model look like
- What will social and emotional learning look like

**Erin Radley - Lincoln Street**

- Member of the Warrant Committee
- How will you tell parents when somebody test positive
- Thank you all for all that you do for MPS

**Jaymee Mannix - 195 Williams Avenue**

- Wondering about the implementation of the Hybrid and Remote Model
- Is the administration team planning to send students back to the school without doing live models
- Live in person instruction is so important
- Responsible thing to do is to test the program
- A plan done on paper is not reassuring

**Regine Jean-Charles – 70 Sumner Street**

- Thanked everyone for all of the work in updated the school plans
- MARC letter was sent on August 8th
- Leadership process was unacceptable, it was maddening to go through this process that parents had to reach out and send request
- MPS committed the MARC Platform there was very little proof that it is taken seriously
- Concerned about the teachers, what about the black and brown teachers that may be at higher risk
- Black and brown professionals should be included in the decision process
- Lot more work to be done at MPS with Equity

**Zakia Jarrett - 110 Dyer Ave**

- Stated that she didn't understand what administration has done to protect teachers
- What happened to the survey done with the teachers
- MEA polled 80% teachers wanted to be remote
- Administration seems to care only about the students and what the families want and not care about the teachers
- Teachers want to be in the classroom but not if it means we are going to die or get sick
- Confused to why you have not responded to how you will keep teaches safe
- What happens when a child infects a teacher/friend and they will have the guilt

**Mary Shapiro - 184 Robbins Street**

- Under the current plan the teachers that opt for the remote plan may not receive the request/accommodations
- Teachers need to make decisions for their own families
- It would be more humane to offer full remote to all, provide accommodations to the student with the most needs
- Teachers want to care for students and families but also need to care for their own
- This is a personal decision that teachers are not going to be able to make

**Ana Frega -**

- How will remote teaching be carried out, will the teachers be in the classroom or streaming from home
- What happens if not enough teachers elect to teach in person with the remote teachers be laid off if their request cannot be accommodated
- Who would teach our students
- Don't want to be in a position as a parent to choose for my children what an educator can do to maintain their livelihood in order to keep their job
- As a parent believe this should have gone to the teachers first and if there were not enough teachers to support the Hybrid Model then this should not have been presented to parents
- Understand that it is important that children need to be in school and need to socialize
- Understand it is difficult for parents who need to work

**Ohene Asare – 70 Sumner Street**

- Appreciate all the work from the committee
- These discussions matters, starting Citizen Speaks later in the evening is difficult
- We stand with our teachers
- We stand with our staff and administrators
- Leadership really matters in so many ways, push on the racial pandemic
- Do we have the right people in the right places
- How are you going to care for those that need help, you need to treat everyone how you want to be treated
- Leadership needs to be able to make decisions on their own with accountability

**Lisa Gilbert Smith - Brook Road**

- Two children at the Tucker Elementary School
- Some parents don't have a choice, if you have a preexisting condition you very well could endanger your family
- Desperately want her own children back in school, they need structure, social and emotional support, they need gymnastics and soccer

- Educators for 30 years
- But at what cost are we willing to send our children back to school
- Concerned that we are not listening to the teachers
- Putting teachers at risk, numbers will rise
- Most equitable decision is to have everyone remote

#### **Alyssa Perkins – Walcott Road**

- Emergency Medical Physician at Boston Medical Center
- Infectious Disease Specialist
- Volunteer Member on the Health Committee
- Involved in assisting committees on the returning staff and students safely
- If not now, when would you want to return to school? It is not realistic to believe we will see a vaccine this academic year or 2 to 3 years
- It is not acceptable to have no in person learning
- Now is the time because our numbers are low in the community and the weather is cooperating to have activities outside
- Rapid testing is being considering due to Superintendant Gormley' dedication and partnership with Milton Hospital

#### **Dyanne Crowley – President MEA**

- Every teacher knows the best learning is in person
- Voices of the Educators are not being heard
- We could welcome as many as 600 students and it is concerning
- Committed to students and the district
- Wanted to come up with created ways to work with students remotely
- No matter what the vote, Milton teachers will delivered incredible opportunities for the students
- Understand this is an important vote, teachers will show up
- Please consider the safety of your employees

#### **Dr. Wesson – Frothingham Street**

- Infectious Disease Specialist at Harvard Medical School
- Direct experience with pandemic planning
- Experience with managing PPE and education
- As an Infectious Disease Specialist, she stated she completely understand how terrifying the virus is
- Been on the front lines caring for Covid patients
- Working with hospitals with planning strategies with hospitals and their PPE
- Important that we recognized we have learned a lot since March
- Reality is the vaccine will not happen any time soon



- CEO of the vaccine company stated it will not happen this year
- Asked if not now to return to school when?
- Working actively to keep people safe
- Willing to offer counseling to teacher in order to educate them about safe PPE practices
- If schools open, Dr. Wesson stated she would send her children back to school

**Regina Malley – 52 Bartons Lane**

- Thank you for all of the amazing work
- 2 children at Cunningham
- We have not heard the concerns of the teachers and wants to know how the parents can help
- Parent are willing to help
- What is needed to get students back to school
- This virus is not going anywhere anytime soon
- Don't want children out of school any longer
- Wanted to say to teachers how can we help

**Joy Garmaise – 47 Hartland Street**

- This decision is causing a lot of stress for about 6-9 hrs of education
- What is being gained
- What will the remote learning look like
- Teach online
- Ask that teachers remain on line with students while they do their work
- If taught for 10 minutes and then the students work on their own will not work
- Need the teachers to remain with our students

**Mr. Ebong – 30 Winthrop Street**

- Express appreciation that all has been done
- Thankful for all the MPS is doing, we know that you are doing your best

**Ms. Roberte – Brush Hill Road**

- Highlight the concern of the equity
- Worried about what is going on in Milton
- Diving the students
- All this just for 6 hours of school a week

**Trish Guglietta – Smith Road**

- Milton Public School Physician
- Physician in Chelsea which is one of the hardest hit communities
- Joined the Health Committee

- Milton rate is safe to return to school
- Hybrid Model is a good comprise for the community although wishes they could go full days
- If we wait for a 0% rate of Covid, then we will not be going back to school any time soon
- An effective vaccine will not be available this school l year
- Asking my 7<sup>th</sup> grader to do his work all alone is not effective
- Waiting for no risk we will never leave our houses again
- It is time for everyone to figure out
- Confident sending her children back to school
- It would be a disservice to teach remotely the next two years

**Robb Kociol – 17 Standish Road**

- Adult Physician and Cardiologist
- Volunteered during the surge in a Covid ICU
- Working on the Health Committee
- If waiting for a vaccine it won't be any time soon
- We are in the green zone so it is safe to return to school
- Hybrid is a better model than full remote
- Children need the social interaction
- PPE plan is in place which will help with the prevention
- Working with Milton Hospital on rapid testing
- Will be sending his own children to school in the Hybrid Model

**Meg Dietrich – 79 Martin Road**

- 2 children at Cunningham
- Pro Hybrid Model
- Looking at the science and trust the Governor who is telling us it is safe to return to school at some capacity
- Can't make everyone happy
- Needs relationships with teachers
- Time to open is now

**Charisse Howse – Atherton Street**

- Parents are torn to make this decision
- Schools have opened in many locations across the country and has not worked and have shut down

- Some Massachusetts schools have decided to go remote, why not Milton
- What are the results of the survey
- Concerned about the decision
- Hybrid Model will bring risk to our children and educators
- Ask that you think carefully that all has transpired over the past few months

**Ian Meropol – 45 Avalon Road**

- 2 Glover Students
- Tough year
- Important that our children are back in school
- Support the Hybrid Model and would support more in school if proposed
- As a community we need to do more to make this happen
- It is a public health issue for our children to be at home
- Remote learning just does not work
- Teachers are our heroes
- Support teachers if they have medical conditions to stay home
- We need our teachers now more than ever to step up
- Trust the experts who are trusting the Hybrid Model
- Thank you for all that you do for Milton

**Art Esposito – Viola Street**

- When people ask if not when, perhaps the answer is not going into flu season is a good time
- Cases are on the rise
- Children will not wear the PPE effectively

**Karen Harris – Granite Place**

- Appreciate all the efforts
- Listening to all the expertise supporting the Hybrid Model is assuring
- Home with 3 children and worried about them
- Not equipped to educate my children
- Kids do not need remote learning
- Concerned about the development happening with our children
- We are able to keep our children safe
- Good to have a choice
- There are a lot of parents that want their children back to school
- Parents need to work in order to provide for our family

**Jackie Slavik – 18 Pope Hill Road**

- Scientist
- Urge the committee to be respectful of the teachers, they are not babysitters
- Concerned about the community most of risk especially parents/students of color
- We are not there with the testing
- We don't have the capacity and data we need to make these decisions
- Talk about being prepared but only has good as the people with who use the PPE, how will we keep children apart and use the PPE

Chair made a motion to move from Citizen Speak after an hour and half.

**Dr. Donahue**

- Thanked all who have emailed in the past few weeks
- All issues have been discussed
- Realistic choices are before us and do not believe not all to be pleased
- Extraordinary plans are in place
- MPS is committed to ownership of the equity plan
- Understand concern of fear from the teachers
- It will be a hurdle
- Intimate investment in the community being a father of 3 children in Milton
- Hybrid is a safe in person instruction plan
- Safety measures are in place
- Dr. Donahue is favor of the revised Hybrid/Remote Learning Choice Model
- Hybrid Plan is safe and equitable

**Dr. Craghead**

- This is the most difficult decision faced with as a professional
- Read Medical and educational articles
- Read hundreds of emails from the community regarding the plans and parents are supporting both plans whatever works best for their families
- Dr. Craghead supported the Hybrid/Remote Learning Choice Model
- Believe this plan is equitable to the community

**Ms. Eberhardt**

- Wanted to thank the Return to School Committee and the Principals
- Hope the teachers can come to an agreement with these plans and understand that parents have a difficult decision to make for their families
- Ms. Eberhardt supported the Hybrid/Remote Learning Choice Model

**Ms. White**

- Thanked the community and the Return to School Task Force
- Ms. White made her statement earlier in the evening in support of the Fully Remote Model

#### **Ms. Rosmarin**

- Appreciated all the emails from parents and the community
- Thanked all the those on the Return to School Committee, has been a lot of work from so many volunteers in the community
- Ms. Rosmarin supported the Hybrid/Remote Learning Choice Model

#### **Chair Varela**

- Thanked everyone on the Return to School Committee, parents, doctors, Administration and Principals
- Understands it will be a difficult decision and thanked all who spoke at Citizen Speak and took the time to write emails to the School Committee
- Chair Varela supported the Hybrid/Remote Choice Plan

Chair Varela made a motion to approve the Hybrid/Remote Learning Choice Model Plan for the Milton Public Schools for the start of the 2020-2021 School Year.

Second: Dr. Craghead

Vote: 5-0-1

### **5. Chair's Report**

#### **a. Draft 2020-2021 School Year Calendar**

Chair Varela made a motion to approve the revised 2020-2021 school year calendar.

Second: Dr. Donahue

Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0

### **6. Next Meeting Agenda Items**

Updated and approved

Chair Varela moved to adjourn from the School Committee Meeting.

Second: Dr. Donahue

Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0

The meeting was adjourned at 10:33pm.

