

Milton School Committee Meeting Minutes
Via Remote Access
July 8, 2020

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

Absent: Dr. Elaine Craghead

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:** 7:09
2. **Approve July 8, 2020 Agenda**
Updated and approved
3. **Citizen Speak (Policy BEDH-15 minutes)**
Chair Varela read the Citizen Speak Policy

Chair Varela made a motion to extend Citizen Speak to 40 minutes.

Second: Ms. White

Roll Call Vote: 5-0-0

Beverly Ross Denny

- 8 years with MPS as a parent
- Shared research based practices
- Met with MPS to share information to benefit the school system
- Troubling what happened with Ms. Jarrett
- Violation with district code
- Milton should be embarrassed to receive this negative attention
- Live in Milton, know people here to be kind and generous
- MPS has to be reconcile the unspoken evil
- Would love to hear from the School Committee or Administration on what is being done to make this better

Phil Jochenning
23 Parkwood Drive

- Greater Boston episode where Ms. Jarrett appeared and was asked if she “would do this again” and she replied no. She would not have a discussion about race with her students.
- Feel it was wrong for School Administration to be an impediment on a mature discussion on race
- Trust our teachers to use good judgment on how to handle such a topic
- The School Committee needs to investigate the situation
- Hire a law firm look into the situation
- Who violated the 2 party consent?
- Did Ms. Jarrett give permission to be recorded?
- Need to protect the legal rights of Ms. Jarrett.

Jennifer Mulqueen

- MPS Parents for 10 years
- Wanted to speak to what I want most for my kids
- Want my children to feel safe and accepted in the community, this has happened in many respects and is grateful
- Upset to hear what happened with Ms. Jarrett, no teacher should be muzzled, they should be able to be authentic and be able to share experiences with our kids
- Educators must be empowered and inspire children
- Need to do work collaboratively

Regine Jean-Charles and Ohene Asare

70 Sumner Street

- Have been in tears on a daily basis, so emotional
- Want you to understand that I come from a shared committee
- Only some of the pain is felt by some
- Needs to be an apology, letter should be sent to all
- Asking for solidarity
- Looking at an all white body of the School Committee
- Would Milton stand with us, hear us and care?
- Time to make the difference, you have the power to make the change

Debra Bingham

27 Hudson Street

- Grandmother of a student in Ms. Jarrett’s class
- Very upset of what happened with Ms. Jarrett
- Leader, Anti Racism
- High rate of inequities
- Have to talk about racism
- Structural racism in the school system
- Absolutely horrified that a teacher was disciplined for talking about racism
- Should be the norm to talk about racism
- Everyone has the right to live with dignity and respect

- School Committee needs to take action
- Disappointed in the Superintendent

Meredith and Matt Thayer

31 Gulliver Street

- Daughters in 6th grade and in Kindergarten
- Moved to this town because we love it here and the school system was a huge part
- Have never been more disappointed in the school system
- Believe fully that racism should be talked about
- Ms. Jarrett being silenced is just very disappointing
- Want to be proud of the leadership and the school system
- Created a culture that has people not feel safe talking about racism
- Beauty here is that there is an opportunity to make a change, you can lead the way
- Milton community is stepping up to support Ms. Jarrett
- Look forward to seeing what is next

Emily Speck

84 Beacon Street Circle

- Rising 3rd grader, Tucker
- Rising 6th grader, Pierce but reluctant to send off to the Pierce Middle School next year because what has happened
- Transition to middle school can be scary but the events that have happened over the past month have really doubled her fear
- Is PMS safe and caring?
- Addressed School Committee about 9 years ago about the French Immersion Program
 - inequitable solutions
- Pierce Middle School has the reputation of disciplining students of color
- Need to change the culture now
- Now we have a problem that is on national news
- We have the power to make these changes, before it was swept under the rug
- Glad my children went to Tucker and hopefully I can say the same about Pierce

Yawa Degboe

208 Brush Hill Road

- Mother of 1st grader at Tucker
- Ask School Committee and administration to give black and brown children the opportunity to thrive instead of struggling
- Inequity in the school system, and shared experience
- 2019 - IEP plans to meet her child needs
- Felt the school was ignorant with the testing with the IEP
- Parents should be able to advocate for their children
- Decided to enroll in the French Immersion program, the IEP could be a conflict
- No IEP support in the French Immersion program

- Asking for equity for all students

David and Caroline Callum

27 Pagoda Street

- 1st Grader, Tucker
- Recognize that MPS has made steps in progression
- What happened to Ms. Jarrett is a roadblock for education
- Educator in the Boston
- No desire or motivation to ever apply to be a teacher in the Milton Public Schools
- Recognize that it is difficult to find educators of color
- Superintendent needs to understand Ms. Jarrett will have ramifications from teachers of color not wanting to work in Milton
- How are you going to address what happened to Ms. Jarrett?

Farah Assiraj

41 Churchill Street

- Mother of a 6th grader
- 1st grade chose French for her daughter
- Received many negative comments about her daughter, even called lazy
- Told her daughter may not qualify to remain in the French Immersion program because of her scores in math
- Had issues with three girls in her class around her daughter's hair being different than everyone else's. Met with Superintendent Gormley at the time and we were able to overcome the situation.
- Needs to be more culturally competency
- Joined committees to be involved and wanted to help with the change
- Also encountered situations where her daughter heard the "n" word used over and over again
- Went to Dr. Spaulding and inform her that it was an issue and that it needed to be addressed
- Told a letter would be put out all parents about racism and there was never a response
- There have been boys who have confronted her daughter over and over
- PMS sat back and did nothing and said there was a training on the "n" word
- Shutting down black and brown children, their voices needed to be heard
- For 2 years her daughter has reported the bullying, it has become the silent killer of black children not to be heard
- Profiling black children which leads suspension, white students are doing the same but not receiving the same discipline
- Complaints about teachers and still no response to this day
- Killing the black children's spirit
- Need to have better answers for our children
- Have not done enough, there has been hurt, need to stop silence the black voices

Patricia Guglietta

- 2 children that began at PMS, adopted her children who are Haitian and have the unique perspective of a white woman
- Work primary with immigrant families in Chelsea, MA
- Physician of the MPS
- What can be done going forward?
- Students were doing a project, there was a hierarchy of a chart where the teachers were up top and the children at the bottom and were called slaves. Brought to the attention to Mr. Fitzgerald who stated that he was not offended by the terminology.
- Son was targeted for being black and disciplined
- Sits with only the black/brown kids at lunch, tend to be the tables that always get in trouble
- Was just happy at Tucker, not happy with Pierce
- This is a stepping stone, School and teachers need to do a better job. This culture is heartbreaking

Stacey Solomon

17 Beacon Street Circle

- Rising 6th Grader
- BPS Educator for over 20 years
- Understand that teachers need to talk about race
- Need a restructuring of the MPS
- Data is alarming with the student of color
- Daughter hears negative comments about being bi-racial and Jewish
- What are our children learning in History
- Need a overhaul of how teachers are trained
- Your policies and procedures need to be updated/changed
- Milton can make this change
- Think about hire procedures

Timoria and Robert Saba

17 Brookside Park

- Parents of rising 1st and 5th grader, Tucker
- You are not capable of understanding these issues
- You need to validate and believe all the stories you are hearing tonight
- More than enough proof that there is a problem
- Parents have come together to help
- Zoned for Glover but chose to attend Tucker because heard that Glover had issues with racism
- In terms of equity you need to protect the black children, you have to believe and listen to the voices of the children and families
- Need to move into action, has to be anti racism education
- Every child should feel safe

- Black students are shuffled to Tucker, so when all are sent to PMS that is why there is trouble because the schools are not segregated

Sandra Joseph

- Need to move forward
- Moved to US, land of opportunity and to have the American dream
- Mind boggling that segregation still exist
- doubting to send her daughter Pierce because of the negative reputation
- Went to Cunningham, her daughter was the only black girl in the class for a long time
- Diversity and inclusion is necessary
- Embrace diversity and proud to be a black woman and want her children to be proud
- Don't feel comfortable to send her daughter to PMS
- Should be able to talk about what is going on in the world
- Love the French Immersion program but needs to be more diversity
- Need to change and work together as a community
- Happy to speak to School Committee

Erin Hardy

155 Robins Street

- Rising 6th grader and rising 1st grader at Tucker
- Part of the Milton Anti Racism Coalition
- Parents have come together for a new platform
- Need to hold accountability to teachers and administrators
- Move to Milton for the diversity
- Study social inequity
- Need to address racism
- Not doing enough about racism and equity
- Teaching tolerance
- Need to do right by our children's education
- Ms. Jarrett is compassionate about educating
- A plan and initiatives is only a small part, need to make a change starting with dismantling racism
- Leaders need to be honest and do the right thing for the children

Lyssa Palu-ay

4 Kahler Ave

- Tucker has been brought up this evening, all positive feedback
- Tucker has not sheltered our kids, Tucker honored our kids
- Works in Higher Education- Milton does not seem to understand racism
- Listened to pain and hurt from parents about Ms. Jarrett
- Heartbroken for our community
- Tucker is a model for the district
- We need to listen

Ayanna and Carlos Quinones
One Kahler Ave

- 2 children at PMS
- Racism is real
- Psychologist here in Milton
- Can't believe how many black children I see from all the schools where they are suffering from grave issues
- Dealing with pain from the treatment from schools
- Mental Health issue when not addressed
- Organizations to help educate children of color
- Need to listen and act, take steps in the right directions
- Need to take responsibility
- Urging and challenging you to make the change
- On a daily basis I have to debrief my children at dinner, listening to them talk about the history of white people and what they are taught at school and it is upsetting but keeps composure for his children
- Tucker is open but PMS is not welcoming
- Hear stories about black children being treated differently

Dmitry Petion
17 Mulberry Rd.

- 2 boys that went to MPS up to 6th grade
- Removed son from PMS after 6th grade, experienced biases behavior from teachers
- Rising 7th grader that I will be taking out of the PMS
- Don't want their son to experience what has been seen so far
- Boys of color are treated differently
- Need to address the issues of racism
- Child's education being affected, need to look at the data
- Bias with teachers and administrators
- Data doesn't lie, we have a pattern
- How many kids successfully go to Tucker and go to PMS and encounter problems
- Kids are not allowed to express themselves, identified as disruptive
- What are you going to do?

Kyan Thornton
18 Crown St.

- Parent of rising 9th grader
- Looking at a lot of blank expressions of the School Committee and a lot of pain from the parents, and felt that was disturbing
- Children went to Glover, and one just graduation from Pierce will be going to the High School next year

- Daughter at one time had trouble with her 3rd grade teacher. Teacher was inappropriate in the way she treated and spoke to her daughter. Had meetings with the teacher and principal but nothing happened with the teacher or daughter.
- Ongoing problem at Pierce with another teacher and felt Mr. Fish was extremely dismissive of the issues
- Met with the teacher and administrators and her daughter was not believed. Her daughter stated numerous times that she felt targeted by the teacher.
- Son is at Glover now, made the request that he not be the only black boy in class
- Would love to see rezoning to see diversity and would like to see more faculty of color

Winston Daley

411 Eliot St.

- Wanted to express his view
- Worked with School Committee
- Work primary with Tucker
- Culture of Milton needs to be addressed
- Tucker is viewed differently than the other schools
- What are you going to do about the culture, there is pain with black and brown people?
- Want you to believe the pain you are hearing from parents/families
- When will there be change, I have been on almost every committee?
- Want to see change

Catherine Arnold

188 Church Hill Lane

- Inspired by all the speakers tonight
- Both children went through the MPS
- Also concerned about the diversity in the schools
- Never paid attention to the School Committee
- School Committee is elective, and there is a time to clean house
- When somebody like Ms. Jarrett doesn't want to teacher in Milton anymore than that is a problem
- Reached out to Chair Varela and appreciated her response
- Who submitted the video and who decided on the discipline of Ms. Jarrett
- Lived her for 24 years and never been so angry

Lanita McCormick

244 Blue Hills Pkwy

- Great experience at Tucker
- Concerned about Pierce Middle School
- Time for the School Committee to look different, start from the top down
- School Committee needs more representation of diversity

- As a community, need to make the change

Ashley Oguadimma

202 Church Hill

- Moving to Milton and registering my children was a disheartening experience
- Have emailed and spoken to several people of the Committee
- Daughter is the only black child at their bus stop, lottery to have my children to be at Tucker and want to keep my children together
- Only two black children in my daughter's Cunningham class
- School Committee needs to show that they care, looks feel like School Committee looks disengaged
- You need to learn how to keep a natural charged based

Lauren Brown

32 Parkway Crescent

- Written several letters and has played phone tag with Superintendent Gormley
- The response has not been very good
- Disappointment with how our school system is right now
- Seeing parents in tears is heartbreaking
- This should not fall on the shoulders of parents
- You don't know what it is like to have to explain to a child that people don't like them because of their skin color
- Children are at Tucker, great school and it is diverse
- Terrifying that kids think it is ok that there is a Tucker table at Pierce
- Disturbing to hear what happen to Ms. Jarrett
- School needs to take responsibility for the mistake
- Family that videotaped Ms. Jarrett was wrong and how was the decision made to fire Ms. Jarrett
- Sounds like Pierce is a problem and needs change
- Being honest and saying sorry goes a long way

Ryan and Timika Gagne

30 Church Hill Street

- Fringe of Milton - close to Hyde Park and Mattapan
- Successful at Tucker and now at Pierce and have faced challenges
- Problem with teacher, daughter was accused of cheating which she was not doing
- Daughter was not believed when she spoke
- To hear that there is a Tucker table at Pierce is disturbing, need to break up this table. The School Committee and Administrators need to lead by example.

Chair Varela made a motion to have Superintendent Gormley speak to item A under the Superintendent report and to move Citizen Speak Topic Response to follow.

4. **Superintendent's Report** - Superintendent Gormley read the Anti-Racism Agenda Statement.
 - a. Expansion in Composition and Charge of MPS Equity and Anti-Racism Strategic Plan Subcommittee

5. Citizen Speak Topic Response - School Committee

Chair Varela made a statement that on behalf of The School Committee; we do hear you and believe you. Chair Varela stated that this was a very powerful evening and also very disheartening. She agreed that a lot of work needs to be done. Stated that Milton is not a perfect school system and hearing the stories about Pierce were concerning. Chair Varela thanked the parents for speaking so honestly. Statements were powerful and emotional. She apologized to the parents for their experiences with the MPS. Chair Varela commented that all the testimonies underscore the need for the Milton Public School to accelerate and deepen work that needs to be done. Milton Public Schools needs to be a more welcoming, inclusive and equitable school system. Chair Varela stated it is time to look forward and focus on some of the initiatives and what needs to be done for the immediate future and beyond. She thanked the Anti-Racism Coalition and stated that the School Committee needs to move the district forward to be an anti racist community. The School Committee is ready to make the investment to make the change. The School Committee has a critical role to play in planning, policies and finances. Chair Varela stated she is ready to stand and lead with conviction.

Ms. Rosmarin thanked all the speakers for sharing their experiences. Ms. Rosmarin stated that Milton has become more diverse over the past 32 years. Commented that all her children were all raised here and attended the Tucker School. She stated it was heartbreaking to hear about parents considering having their children go elsewhere for middle school. Ms. Rosmarin also stated that she heard the parents, believed the stories and thanked the parents again for speaking.

Ms. Eberhardt commented that she was in a bit of shock, stated to all the families that the School Committee hears, sees you and wants to work harder together. Ms. Eberhardt commented that she has worked with Winston Daley and Beverly Ross Denny on Committees. She stated that the School Committee is not the best forum to communicate with the community and would welcome more conversations with parents. She stated that the School Committee needs to support our educators and the commitment to the work against racism. Thanked parents again for coming forward and speaking. Ms. Eberhardt encouraged parents to run for the School Committee and welcomes new members.

Ms. White thanked all the parents for speaking, understands it takes a lot of courage to speak about such personal and painful experiences. She stated that she appreciated their

honesty and the willingness to share. Ms. White commented that the School Committee is listening to the families and the children. She stated that the School Committee needs the help of the families, their passion and hopes that the families do not give up on the Milton school system.

Dr. Donahue stated he felt grief listening to all the experiences from the families and the reactions with how the families' experiences were met. Dr. Donahue stated it took too long to get here and apologized for everything.

Superintendent's Report - continued

- Return to School Update to be posted in the Superintendent Blog
- Happenings -to be posted in the Superintendent Blog

6. Chair's Report

- a. MASC Anti-Racism Resolution and COVID 19 Resolution - Chair Varela reported that each district is being asked to vote on two Resolutions. Chair Varela read both statements and the Resolutions.

Chair Varela made the motion to approve the Resolution recommended by MASC with regard to COVID-19 State Funding.

Second: Dr. Donahue
Roll Call Vote:5-0-0

Chair Varela made the motion to approve the School Committee Anti-Racism Resolution recommended by MASC.

Second: Dr. Donahue
Roll Call Vote:5-0-0

7. Finance Subcommittee Report - Chair Varela

- a. Approval of Vendor Warrants

Chair Varela made the motion to approve the following Vendor Warrants:

- Warrant 50 payable June 11, 2020 in the amount of \$142,172.50
- Warrant 51 payable June 18, 2020 in the amount of \$345,372.28
- Warrant 52 payable June 25, 2020 in the amount of \$26,100.00
- Warrant 53 payable July 2, 2020 in the amount of \$490,820.44
- Warrant 54 payable July 9, 2020 in the amount of \$193,616.53

Second: Ms. White

Roll Call Vote:5-0-0

8. Policy Subcommittee Report - Dr. Donahue reported on the below policies, hoping to have more to discuss in the fall with the School Committee.

- a. Discussion, Policy JBB, Educational Equity
- b. Discussion, Policy IHBHE, Remote Learning
- c. Discussion, Policy IHBHE-E, Remote Learning Addendum

9. Approval of Minutes

- May 27, 2020
- June 3, 2020
- June 10, 2020

Chair Varela made a motion to approve the School Committee Minutes listed.

Second: Ms. White

Roll Call Vote:5-0-0

10. Old Business

None

11. Next Meeting Agenda Items

Updated and approved

12. Citizen Speak (Policy BEDH-15 minutes) - None

Chair Varela moved to adjourn from the School Committee Meeting.

Second: Dr. Donahue

Roll Call Vote:5-0-0

The meeting was adjourned at 10:14pm.