

Milton School Committee Meeting Minutes
Via Remote Access
July 29, 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

Chair Varela asked for a moment of silence for the following members of the community.

- Ted Hayes
- Edward Duffy
- Bernie Lynch

2. Approve July 29, 2020 Agenda

Updated and approved

Chair Varela made a motion to extend Citizen Speak to 30 minutes.

Second: White

Vote: 6-0-0

3. Superintendent's Report - Superintendent Mary Gormley introduced the following to present the three return to school models:

- Ada Rosmarin, School Committee
- 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
 - Zeina Hamada, Director World Language
 - Bill Ritchie, Director of Consolidated Facilities
 - Jackie Morgan, Director of Food Services
 - Kim Coughlin, Head Nurse
 - Caroline Kinsella, Town of Milton Board of Health
- a. Return to School Update
 - i. Full Return
 - ii. Hybrid Model
 - iii. Remote Learning

Superintendent Gormley reminded the community about the Return to School Question and Answer Session on July 30, 2020 - 5:45pm-7pm.

Chair Varela asked the School Committee for any questions about the Return to School Presentation.

Ms. White asked if Principal Jette could speak about the High School schedule. Specifically the afternoon remote classes. Are there better classes that are remote learning compared to in person? Mr. Jette replied yes classes are still under review, all classes are being considered. Mr. Jette stated that he understood that remote learning will be challenging for families, especially if you have a larger family all on devices at once.

Ms. White also asked what guidelines are in place if a child was to become ill during the day. Kim Coughlin replied that protocols were given along with guidelines if a student gets sick on the bus or in school. Kim Coughlin stated if a child was to become sick while in school it is recommended that all schools have a medical waiting room separate from the nurse's office. All students will be wearing masks and health care providers will be required to be wearing full PPE. All students would be 6ft apart and there would be a medical assessment given to the child. Depending on the student and symptoms, they would be tested elsewhere, and it would communicate to parents how long they would need to stay out of school. Contact tracing would also take place. Ms. Kinsella would also be involved for guidance.

Chair Varela asked Kim Coughlin how is the designated area/medical waiting room being staffed? Superintendent Gormley asked Dr. Pavlicek to speak on behalf of the grants given. Dr. Pavlicek commented there were many grants; one was out of the Federal Stimulus funds that would give funds up to \$225 per student which would give Milton almost a million dollars. Funds can be used for anything related to opening the schools. For example, 1500 chrome books,

part time nurses, PPE, extra custodians and sanitization. These funds would need to be used by December 31, 2020. Superintendent Gormley stated that nurses have to be a priority as well as custodians. There has also been some concern around social and emotional learning; Adjustments Counselors will play a huge role. There will be a proposal brought to the school committee on how to prioritize the grant. Caroline Kinsella is also a resource and will be available to provide guidance.

Ms. Kinsella stated that the model and work has been incredible. Stated she would be working closely with Kim Sullivan to make sure the students, teachers and staff remain safe. Thanked the committee for the fantastic job.

Chair Varela stated that for the record that she believed that the request of spending the grant by December 31, 2020 is not appropriate. Nurses need to be hired full time for the year and not just part time through December. The health office and nurse need to be in position and a priority.

Dr. Craghead stated that more funds may be available in January. Dr. Pavlicek stated this is the federal government not the Commissioner or DESE.

Ms. Eberhardt thanked all for the presentation, it is a lot of work and is truly amazing. Ms. Eberhardt stated she understands it is hard for families and educators. Ms. Eberhardt asked Principal Jette about the High School schedule, day 1-4 what happens on day 5? Principal Jette clarified that it is a 4 day rotating schedule. Ms. Eberhardt asked how many children will be in one room? Karen McDavitt replied on average will be 10-14 students in a room but if numbers grow we will use larger rooms, libraries, cafe and gyms. Ms. Eberhardt asked how many in a building at a time? What is the capacity? Dr. Pavlicek replied guidelines are 50% or more, there is no percentage set right now from the Commissioner or DESE. Ms. Eberhardt also asked about students that all remote, will they still be given homerooms, are they incorporated into the models, will they be in a separate model. Superintendent Gormley replied that guidelines have not been given just yet from the Commissioner. Ms. Eberhardt asked if there are opportunities for High School students to work remotely with younger French Immersion? Mr. Jette replied yes, there have been talks about students being available for independent projects or tutoring. This is a possibility, especially for seniors that have completely all of their electives.

Dr. Donahue thanked all for all the tremendous work that went into the presentation.

Chair Varela asked about full return to school, asked Dr. Redden what does it mean for Cunningham that students could not return fully? Dr. Redden stated that shared spaces would need to be utilized. Specialized spaces don't have windows so would be off limits. Chair Varela

stated the 3 feet apart in the full return, what is the ballpark figure how much it would cost to accommodate? Mr. Jette replied additional support would be needed and added more teachers, nurses and custodians. It would be a financial challenge and a space challenge. Chair Varela asked where would the money come from for the additional staff for the full return? Ms. Rosmarin commented that 3 feet would be considered not safe at this time. The recommendation at this time is going to be 6 feet for Milton Public Schools.

Ms. Rosmarin stated that she was so grateful to the people of Milton, the community volunteers and staff to work together to solve a difficult problem in challenging times. Really need to list items needed to open schools safely, PPE, additional nurses, staff, custodians and health care professionals. This pandemic has had a severe impact on the mental health of our students and our families. MPS needs to be prepared to address the needs especially when students return.

Dr. Craghead thanked the committee for the presentation. Stated that the School Committee needs to talk about transportation which will be another cost. Last year MPS had to cut a bus, currently only have 10 buses. There is no way buses could transport students with the return in full plan. A million dollars sounds like a lot of money in the return to school budget but not when you start to itemize the list.

Superintendent Gormley asked Dr. Pavlicek to speak on behalf of the bus guidelines. Dr. Pavlicek replied DESE released guidelines that only one student per seat every other seat and seats will be assigned. 23 students per bus, and a bus monitor would need to be hired to enforce the assigned seating. Some routes will have to be changed/alterd. MPS may not be able to transport all students. A survey will be sent out to parents to ask if they would be comfortable sending their child on the bus.

Ms. White asked about the outside spaces and the cost renting or purchasing tents for outdoor classrooms, eating, recess and mask breaks. Dr. Pavlicek and Superintendent Gormley replied the cost just to tent the High School courtyard would be about \$5,000 a week. Superintendent Gormley stated that all principals are designating areas for outdoor space and looking at the cost.

Chair Varela made a motion to move onto Finance.

4. Finance Subcommittee Report - Dr. Craghead

- a. Proposal of New Position – Director of Educational Equity

DRAFT

Superintendent proposes new Director of Educational Equity position for the Milton Public Schools

Senior leadership role would help drive the district's anti-racism work

MILTON, MA – Milton Public Schools Superintendent Mary C. Gormley will recommend to the Milton School Committee the creation of a new senior leadership position, Director of Educational Equity, to help advance the school district's accelerated work in diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and anti-racism.

Superintendent Gormley recommended the position to the board's Finance Subcommittee on July 21, which unanimously approved the recommendation, and will present it to the full School Committee for a vote at its meeting tomorrow night (Wednesday, July 29, 2020). The position does not require an additional appropriation from the School Committee or the town, because the Superintendent's recommendation includes the use of funds from unfilled positions in the current fiscal year.

The Superintendent and School Committee had originally planned to consider the new position as part of the budget development process next spring for the 2021-2022 school year, but agreed on the importance of hiring for the role this school year to underscore the urgency of the work. At the July 8 meeting of the School Committee, Superintendent Gormley announced three immediate steps to address racial disparities and inequities in the school system:

1. Establishing the Milton Public Schools **Anti-Racism Action Team** comprised of parents, educators, and community members;
2. Charging the Action Team with drafting a Milton Public Schools **Anti-Racism Action Plan**, with action steps, timelines, and reporting and monitoring structures;
3. Issuing a Request for Proposals for a district-wide **Equity Audit**, conducted by an external consultant, to assess issues of equity and inequity across all academic and operational aspects of the district.

“We are deeply committed to building an anti-racism school system, grounded in safe, welcoming, inclusive learning environments where every child has full access to opportunities

and resources to achieve personal and academic success,” said Superintendent Gormley. “We know that we have a great deal of critical work to do in order to realize that vision, so it is essential that my leadership team is enhanced by a leader with deep expertise in identifying and eradicating obstacles to a truly equitable system, including dismantling forms of systemic racism and oppression in public education.”

Sheila Egan Varela, Chair of the Milton School Committee, commends the Superintendent’s recommendation of creating the new position as an important component of the district’s work moving forward.

“The School Committee is fully dedicated and engaged to making systemic changes needed in policy, practice, curriculum, instruction, resource allocation, and other areas of the Milton Public Schools to eliminate racism and bias in all of their forms,” said Ms. Varela.

Earlier this summer, the Milton Anti-Racist Coalition (MARC), a group of parents and community members, presented the School Committee and Superintendent with the *MPS Reform Platform*, which includes a recommendation to establish an office in the district to lead the design and implementation of anti-racism work and strengthen accountability. Superintendent Gormley said she will consult members of MARC and other educators and community members to craft a job description for the Director of Educational Equity, and she will seek community support to recruit and screen qualified candidates. She said she expects the position’s responsibilities to include supporting parents, students, and educators on issues related to equity and anti-racism, designing and leading implementation of anti-racism initiatives, coordinating professional development in equity and anti-racism to staff in all schools and central offices, and bringing additional expertise and accountability to the district’s ongoing work in recruiting and hiring a diverse teaching staff, developing an anti-racism curriculum, and other critical issues.

Dr. Craghead made a motion to approve the Superintendent’s recommendation for the creation of a Director of Educational Equity position for the Milton Public Schools.

Second: Ms. White

Roll Call Vote:6-0-0

b. Approval of Vendor Warrants

Dr. Craghead made a motion to approve Vendor Warrant #3 in the amount of \$169,083.43 payable on July 23, 2020.

Second: Chair Varela

Roll Call Vote:6-0-0

5. Policy Subcommittee Report - Dr. Donahue

- a. Policy IHBHE, Remote Learning
- b. Anti-Racism Policy

DRAFT REMOTE LEARNING

Remote learning may at times become an integral part of the Milton Public Schools Curriculum. The Administration shall develop internal policies and plans in accordance with this general policy.

I – Remote learning in response to a district-specific or state-wide emergency.

In the event of a district-specific emergency requiring the use of remote learning, the superintendent of schools may declare such an emergency and shall, as soon as possible, obtain the approval of the school committee, or if unable, the approval of the Chair. The general district remote learning plan below will be applicable in cases of disease, weather emergencies, destruction or damage to schools rendering them inaccessible, or other extraordinary circumstances, including emergencies declared by government officials, the school committee, or the superintendent, but shall be tailored to meet specific circumstances.

When it becomes necessary for the school district to provide support to students who are unable to attend classes or access appropriate services due to an extended closure, the superintendent shall establish a plan and procedures to ensure that such services are provided. The provision of educational services may include the use of technology and devices, and strategies designed to support student learning away from school and may deviate from current in-person educational practices to only the extent needed for practical implementation.

The remote learning plan will, to the extent possible:

- Ensure the safety of all students and faculty in coordination with appropriate local and state departments and agencies;
- Provide support for student social and emotional wellbeing and address the implications of trauma experienced by students or faculty as a result of the emergency;
- Identify goals and strategies for maintaining standards of student achievement and school improvement plans;
- Ensure instruction and services are delivered by district educators and personnel as much as practicable;
- Utilize the most effective tools and resources available for students and faculty, including the skills and talents of district personnel, in the delivery of instruction and services and share resources as needed;
- Provide resources and services equitably to meet the needs and circumstances of all students;

- Identify remedial strategies necessary after the emergency to advance student achievement (i.e. after-school, extended day, summer school, and contingency scheduling to cancel vacations.);
- Gather information both during and after the period of emergency regarding the most effective means of remote learning to implement as appropriate.

In developing a remote learning plan, the superintendent will:

- Identify and prepare effective means for communicating with faculty, students, parents and community stakeholders.
- Collaborate with municipal agencies that support the schools and community.
- Consult with the school committee to identify any extraordinary actions necessary or authority required to administer emergency and remote learning plans. This includes any changes to district policies on the school calendar, grading, promotions and retentions, local graduation requirements, testing, and standards and accountability.
- Consult with administrators and principals to ensure the continuing education of students at all levels, including:
 - use of the most appropriate resources, tools and strategies to deliver the curricula given local circumstances and conditions;
 - equitable access to appropriate content for all students;
 - specific accommodations for students at high risk, including clients of special education, students with disabilities, English learners, students at economic disadvantage, homeless students, students in foster care and students of military families.
- Utilize available technological resources suitable for serving students at all levels. This inventory will be prepared in advance in anticipation of an emergency.
- Ensure the privacy rights of students, faculty and families are protected, including assessing the security of district technology.
- Consult with bargaining units to determine if modifications to collective bargaining agreements need to be established for the period of the emergency.
- Identify the financial implications of the emergency plan and recommend transfer of funds as may be necessary.
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II – Remote learning for curriculum enhancement

In the event that the Superintendent identifies opportunities for the enhancement of existing curriculum or the development of new curriculum that better aligns with the district goals and Strategic Plan the Superintendent or their designee shall xxxxx

Developments under this policy shall be made in conjunction with [AJ's title here] and shall be in accordance with the district's digital use policy ensuring utilized content safeguards student privacy

Such curriculum innovation shall be made equitably available to eligible members of the student body

Such curriculum innovations shall not have disparate effects on the overall equity of the district overall.

III – Remote learning in support of individual students

The Superintendent shall make remote learning opportunities available as part of short- or long-term accommodations in support of individual students on a case-by-case basis. This decision shall be made in conjunction with the student, parents/guardians, the student's individual educators, and the student's principal.

IV – General:

Content produced for and/or accessed through the remote learning curriculum of the Milton Public Schools is the intellectual property of the Milton Public Schools. The duplication, recording, dissemination, or unauthorized alteration of this content is strictly prohibited. The Superintendent or their designee shall investigate unauthorized use, dissemination, and alteration and refer the matter to law enforcement and/or discipline parties pursuant to the results of this investigation and in accordance with the student handbook and other district discipline policies as needed.

Chair Varela suggested reading and giving feedback at the next School Committee meeting, and the School Committee will also vote on the Policy.

DRAFT

Anti-Racism Policy

Policy Statement:

The Milton School Committee and the Milton Public School District pledge to create and sustain a learning environment that interrupts and dismantles the systems of bias and privilege that perpetuate racism within our school system. The Milton School Committee and the Milton

Public Schools reject all forms of racism as harmful and destructive to students, families, educators and the Milton Community. The **mission** of the **Milton Public Schools** is to educate, challenge, and empower all students to be productive, caring, contributing, **anti-racist** members of society. We commit to creating an intentional and inclusive anti-racist school system by removing systemic barriers to achievement.

Policy Communication:

A copy of the Anti Racist Statement and Policy shall be posted in each classroom and common area in the school buildings.

The statement and policy will be included in all handbooks.

The statement and policy will be translated and available to families.

The Milton School Committee shall address systemic racism as follows:

1. Leadership and Administration:

- The administration will conduct periodic equity needs assessments that identify processes and practices that contribute to inequitable outcomes. Strategies will be developed and implemented to eradicate these practices.
- The administration will recruit, hire and retain black and brown educators using data driven, targeted strategies to inform outreach strategies.
- Professional development on anti-racist education will be provided annually for all employees of the Milton Public Schools.
- The school committee shall engage in professional development on anti-racist and healing centered education and how to measure and assess the effectiveness of these practices in the Milton Public Schools.

2. Curriculum and Instruction:

- Curriculum and instructional materials, Pre-K-12, will be provided that are racially and culturally diverse, include anti-bias, anti-racist units of study and include representative history of Black Indigenous People of Color.
- Periodic review/examination of all curriculum and instructional material shall occur.

3. Budget:

- The Administration, in conjunction with site councils, will determine the financial resources needed to insure implementation of this policy and present these needs to the school committee each budgetary cycle.

4. Evaluation and Assessment of the District and Superintendent:

- The administration will collect, review and provide an annual report to the school committee on data regarding racial disparities in achievement, enrollment, suspension, discipline, graduation rates, and advanced coursework access. The report will include evidence of growth in each area outlined by the anti-racism policy. Suggestions for improvement and further growth should also be outlined.
- The Superintendent will be evaluated on the implementation of this policy and this evaluation will include evidence gathered from site councils, parent and student surveys and school based presentations on the effectiveness of the policy

Ms. Eberhardt commented that the policy is a mission with the community, need information before making decisions. Need more inclusive voices, hear all of the voices and families. This committee belongs to the community. Add Anti-Racism to the School Committee mission statement.

c. COVID-19 Policy

DRAFT

COVID-19 PANDEMIC POLICY ALTERATION POLICY

Given the unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and the rapid time course over which the severity of the pandemic may change, the realities of educating in this setting may require deviation from established Milton Public School policies.

Pursuant to this policy the Superintendent is generally empowered to deviate from MPS policy to maintain the health and safety of the MPS community while maintaining academic standards of the highest level possible. Such deviations shall be reported to the School Committee as part of the ongoing feedback and communication process between the Superintendent and the School Committee.

However, specific deviation from policies regarding:

- The 2020-2021 School calendar;
- Grading and Retention; and
- Local graduation requirements

shall require votes by the School Committee

Changes in the current COVID education model between full in person, hybrid, and full remote models shall be endorsed by the School Committee as soon as is practical.

This policy shall remain in effect until July 1, 2021 unless revoked by act of the School Committee.

Chair Varela asked if anyone had questions at this time.

Dr. Craghead thanked Ms. Eberhardt for all of her work on the Anti-Racism Policy.

6. Citizen Speak (Policy BEDH-30 minutes)

- Dr. Regine Jean-Charles - 70 Sumner Street.
 - Happy to hear that the Director of Educational Equity position is being added to the Milton Public School
 - Concerned that the person in this position would need to report the Superintendent, believe it could pose a problem
 - Want the position to be a transformative position
 - Consider who the person would report to, should be fully staffed and have the power to make change in the district
- Crystal Dias - Harold Street.
 - Questioned the equity role, understand you are just beginning this discussion. It is important that this person should be a person of color and is educated with Anti-Racism.
- Sue Wereska - 114 Granite Place. Child going into Kindergarten and a 2nd Grader.
 - Heard a lot about health and safety precautions in place
 - Concern is what a classroom is truly going to look like in September with social distancing
 - Students look forward to seeing their friends, playing and talking with friends
 - All of those interactions are going to be removed
 - Parents that are motivated to have kids back in school need to look at the reality
 - Fear for the social well being for the students
- Yawa Degboe - 208 Brush Hill Road
 - What is your vision for the Anti-Racism role
 - This person has power but can't work alone
 - Fully understand how to support the role
 - Timeline, would this person be involved in the back to school plan
- Erin Hardy - 165 Robins Street
 - Second, the comments made by Regine earlier

- Appreciate the district is going forward with the position
- The position should be flexible
- Should recanvas the parent community about the return to school
- Collect information and equity perspective
- Dimensions of families that it would affect
- Be true to the voices being heard
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- Kristen Graham
 - Curious about the 2 models, Hybrid Model - is every district is going to be different across the state
 - Concerned about the cleaning being done
 - Full Remote - wondering about the sessions, the scheduling, and how many minutes for each class
 - With the younger kids what can they sustain
 - Need a check in time, are the kids doing the work on Google classroom
 - Glad you are moving forward with the Anti-Racism position
- Joy Garmaise – 47 Harland Street
 - Please about the new position
 - Concerned about the new person will be free to challenge
 - Wonder at other options on reporting, look at the conflict of interest
 - Should be a strong position without barriers

7. Chair's Report - Chair Varela

- The next School Committee meeting will be added on August 5th.

8. Citizen Speak Topic Response

Chair Varela thanked all who spoke this evening. Asked Superintendent Gormley to speak on the timeline for hiring for the Anti-Racism Position. Superintendent Gormley stated that at the next school meeting a firm timeline will be given with the updated job descriptions.

9. Approval of Minutes

Chair Varela put forth a motion to approve School Committee Minutes of July 8, 2020.

Second: Ms. White

Roll Call Vote: 5-0-1

Dr. Crahead was absent from the July 8, 2020 meeting.

10. Next Meeting Agenda Items

Updated and approved

11. Executive Session

a. Negotiation Strategy for Union Personnel (MEA)

Chair Varela moved to adjourn to go into Executive Session not to return to open session for the purpose of discussion of Negotiation Strategy for Negotiation Strategy for Union Personnel (MEA) and Approval of Minutes.

Second: Ms. White

Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40pm.