

Milton School Committee Meeting
Remote via Zoom
July 21, 2021

Committee Present: Chair; Margaret Eberhardt, Dr. Elizabeth Carroll, Dr. Elaine Craghead, Beverly Ross Denny, Betty White

Staff Present: James Jette, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Karen Spaulding, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Human Resources; Amy Dexter, Assistant Superintendent for Business

Absent: Vice Chair; Ada Rosmarin

(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** - 7:02pm
2. **Approve July 21, 2021 Agenda**
Updated and approved
3. **Citizen Speak (Policy BEDH-15 minutes)**

Regine Jean-Charles - 70 Sumner Street

- Speaking on behalf of MARC
- 500 Active Members across town
- About a year ago came together in solidarity
 - More inclusive, equity and just for every student every day
- Commend the School Committee for prioritizing the Equity Review and with Equity lens
- New territory for Milton
- Already remember all children in our town will benefit
- Equity Centered Review for a robust review
- Equitable and antiracist education
- Support the district for their ongoing dedication
- We all have a role to play to be a part of the process
- Stand together in solidarity
- Challenging times again but believe that we can and will make progress together
- Reminder to the community that we should unify and bind together, this work will bring the community together

- Stronger together

Susan Koch-Weser - 115 Warner Ave

- 2 boys at the Middle and High School
- Public Health Professional
- Fully endorse the survey for the Equity Audit
- Applied all the equity work being done
- Grateful to have children in the Milton Public Schools
- Asking a child how they feel is nurturing
- The early you support a child the better their long term health
- Best practice to have a third party to conduct the audit
- Well spent money on the Audit
- Investment in understanding our youth
- Support the survey as mothers and health professionals
- Appreciate your work to make our schools equitable and safe

Mark Johnson - 204 Church Street

- Thank to the district led by Superintendent Jette for getting through a tough time getting through the survey and audit
- Feels good to live where the district cares about equity and inclusion
- Better for all of our kids

Robert Burke

- Need more than 3 minutes to speak
- Need to have a conversation about this survey
- Talking about school, policy this is ridiculous
- Waste of time
- This is turning the town upside down
- Can't hide behind zoom all the time
- We will see you again in court or on TV
- Need to talk about Ms. Jarrett
 - Chair Eberhardt reminded Mr. Burke about the rules/policy of citizen speak
- This is nonsense, you should be ashamed of yourself
- People are on to you
- We are coming after you
- Bad toxic belief system
- You are all Marxist I'll bring some holy water for you

4. Superintendent's Report - Superintendent Jette

- a. District Updates - Stand 100% behind the Equity Audit
 - i. Cambridge Education - Equity Audit - Chris Finn and Team Presentation
 - Presentation available on the MPS website

Superintendent Jette

- Thanked Mr. Finn and his team for his thorough presentation
- Our job is to prepare all students to be successful
- Goal is to focus on every student in MPS
- Looking forward to enhance the educational experience for all students

Ms. White

- Can you elaborate on the focus groups and comment of percentage of parents that participated
 - Mr. Finn replied that the focus groups included teachers, parents and community members
 - Wanted to hear from all parents, really broad and varied across the district
 - Parents and teachers wanted to have a voice
 - Wanted to have as many voices as possible
 - Survey was voluntary, biggest response from the students
 - It was powerful to have such a great response from the students
 - Kids don't really have a filter, they provide the honest information
 - 12% parent participation, not a very high rate
 - Stakeholders focus groups were also parents

Ms. Ross Denny

- Thank for the comprehensive review
- Concerned about the disproportionate discipline in race and Special Education referrals
- Wondering if you can share how the students feel?
- Concerned that adults are experiencing mental health crisis in town

Mr. Finn replied

- High number of students said they felt supported in school
- High number of color students being suspended, but students don't seem to be aware of that disproportionality
- Teachers need to be culturally trained and with students with disabilities
- Behavior can be linked to their disability
- Teachers need to be trained on how to support all students

Ms. Ross Denny

- Review of Social Studies, is MPS teaching Critical Race Theory?
- What were the changes in the social studies curriculum

Dr. Tegnell

- Social Studies Curriculum, is undergoing a transformation right now especially at the high school level
- Different courses are being offered to promote more engagement
- Perception was K-5 - met the state framework but a review was going to take place
- Middle School - should pair with the high school and review work with teacher to provide more district wide materials
- Goal is to make the curriculum more equitable and diverse

Superintendent Jette

- Stated the Critical Race Theory will not be taught in the Milton Public Schools
- Asking teachers to be Culturally Responsive
- Wide variety of curriculum
- Provide different choices
- Focusing on every students

Ms. Ross Denny

- Concerned about the level of misinformation of what is being taught as well as
- Include survey, focus groups and interviews
- Unfortunately misinformation is being published every week on social media
- School Committee and MPS needs to make sure we are communicating the correct information to the community, ex (Facebook/Milton Times)
- Causes distress
- We as a community need to get people the services and support they need
- Thank you for all that you have done with the Equity Audit

Dr. Craghead

- Agree that SC somehow need to get the message out there, the Audit is more than one survey
- Need to make an effort what was at stake and what the money was spent on
- Clear concrete work and so much more needs to be done
- Really concerned about the disproportionality of discipline with students of color and Special Education
- Equity across the board not just race has been discussed
- Raised important concerns
- Attention has been paid to the questions about sexuality, wondering if Mr. Finn could speak

Mr. Finn

- Agreed it is not solely about race
- Gender, sexuality all have been discussed
- People seem to focused on the 50,000 spent
- Economic disadvantage
- All is mentioned in the formal report

Dr. Carroll

- Thanked Mr. Finn and colleagues for sharing the report
- Eager to see the full report
- Will work together with the community to share their feedback
- Asked Mr. Finn if there were any special needs students concerns
 - Mr. Finn replied he spoke with parents that they need more support and resources
 - But also received positive feedback that plenty of resources were available
 - Deeper information is available in the report
- Can you please confirm that the report will be available with the community?
 - Superintendent Jette replied yes he would send a link to the community
 - Worked will be discussed, wants to provide the correct information
 - Goal to make the investment and will share with report
 - MPS has all the ingredients to be a successful district
 - Always room for improvement
- Dr. Carroll commented that she is interested in the final slide, working through a series of steps to do the strategic planning. Thank Mr. Finn for helping provide the road map.
- Have a lot of work to do, this is a call to action as a town and as a district
- Need to alien our policies and strategic planning
- Teachers need support, recognizing we need to work together to do the best that we can for our students
- Grateful for all the time spent on the survey

Superintendent Jette

- This is just the presentation this evening
- Report has not be provided at this time
- Final report will available to Administration, Teachers and Community
- Forums will be available for the community to speak and ask questions

Chair Eberhardt

- Thank you for the findings for our community
- Important and necessary work
- Benefits all students

- Some of the data is heartbreaking
- Work with young children and an education, and want disproportionality to disappear
- Larger report will be available for the district, it will be a public record
- Will have forums available for the community, all will be involved
- Need to support our teachers, students and families
- How can we involve more people
- Need to better define equity
- Thanked Mr. Finn and his team for his presentation

Mr. Finn

- Thanked Superintendent Jette and the School Committee
- Decided as a district to accept this challenging work

Superintendent Jette

- Want to move forward
- Have a Steering Committee
- Our budget is what we value
- Advocate for the needs of the district
- Federal money is temporary and comes with restrictions

ii. Bias Incident/Sexual Misconduct Reporting - Dr. Spaulding

- Update on the status
- Worked with the Administrators and parents
- Surfacing the experiences of the students in school
- Conversations with other districts to see what they have in place
- Looking for a system to use in all 6 schools
- Boston Publics Schools gave a lot of time and information
- Have a final draft prepared
- Elevated student voices
- Somaly Prak-Martins jumped into the process, has a strong background
- Asked questions about experiences, asked how they learned and most responded learned from social media
- Need to provide students with the correct language
- Need constantly with the reporting and follow up
- How can we address the harm that was done
- Goal to have a system in place, supporting and provided Professional Development

- Tier I, II, III training taking place this summer for teachers and administrators
- [Somaly Prak-Martins](#) will be involved in the process and building the data systems
- What can we do to be proactive
- Susan Marselli also involved in the proposed plans
- Support building capacity and understanding restorative practices

Ms. Ross Denny

- Appreciate all the work that has been done
- Love to hear about the steps, what are the major milestones and the timeline

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Spaulding

- Completion of the Restorative Practice Training - looking to complete by the end of the summer
- Material to be sent out - Communication effort
 - Communicating with parents, staff and students
 - August timeline for materials
 - To be prepared with the communication
- Professional Development
 - Done by the end of the summer
 - Data system - who looks at the data - and what is being done with the data
 - Create and provide support environment

Superintendent Jette

- Restorative Justice starts with the Professional Development for the teachers
- Need to be cautious with the timeline, teachers are on vacation in the summer, in the fall more Professional Development will be provided

Dr. Carroll

- Mentioned that the building leaders are being trained this summer
- Is the system new infrastructure for all to do their work? This is existing staff, we are providing support to staff

iii. Director of Information Technology –Job Classification Update

Superintendent Jette

- Has been no change in the past 11 plus years in job classification
- So much has changed over the years, including Google accounts, 5,000 devices, security in all building, computer swipe cards, renovated buildings, phones and voicemail systems

- Provide support to teachers and students
- Bring to the attention to the community
- Review in salary to be close to market value in our district
- IT Director has worked with the district
- Revised the job description and salary contract for the IT Director

Dr. Craghead

- Commented that the reason The School Committee and Administration were able to do this increase in salary was due to the unexpected retirements of teachers
- Funds became available through the unexpected retirements

5. Chair's Report - Chair Eberhardt

a. Milton School Committee Subcommittees

Chair Eberhardt made a motion to approve the members of the Committee Subcommittees.

Second: Ms. White

Roll Call Vote:5-0-0

Absent during the Vote: Vice Chair; Ada Rosmarin

b. School Committee Retreat: Agenda Draft

- Scheduled for Aug 4, 2021
- 6hrs can happen over two meetings
- Goals of the Superintendent
- Goals of the School Committee

Dr. Craghead

- Would recommended having the retreat over two days

The School Committee agrees with the two days of the retreat. Communications of date and times to follow.

c. Draft 2021-2022 School Committee Meeting Calendar

- Outlined a general calendar and topics

Chair Eberhardt made a motion to approve the 2021-2022 Draft Calendars.

Second: Dr. Craghead

Roll Call Vote:5-0-0

Absent during the Vote: Vice Chair; Ada Rosmarin

6. Finance Subcommittee Report - Dr. Craghead

a. Approval of Vendor Warrants

Dr. Craghead made a motion to approve to approve:

FY21 Vendor Warrants

- Vendor Warrant #49 payable June 10, 2021 in the amount of \$350,172.97.
- Vendor Warrant #51 payable June 24, 2021 in the amount \$762,830.27
- Vendor Warrant #53 payable July 8, 2021 in the amount \$59,757.24
- Vendor Warrant #54 payable July 15, 2021 in the amount \$34,004.84

FY22 Vendor Warrant

- Vendor Warrant #3 payable July 15, 2021 in the amount \$4,000.

Second: Ms. White

Roll Call Vote:5-0-0

Absent during the Vote: Vice Chair; Ada Rosmarin

Dr. Craghead made a motion to approve Vendor Warrant #52 payable July 1, 2021 in the amount \$418,159.68.

Second: Dr. Carroll

Roll Call Vote: 4-0-1

Absent during the Vote: Vice Chair; Ada Rosmarin

7. Approval of Minutes

Chair Eberhardt made a motion to approve School Committee Minutes dated June 16, 2021.

Amendment to the June 16, 2021 Minutes: Ms. White arrived late to the School Committee Meeting, arriving at 8:15pm.

Second: Dr. Craghead

Roll Call Vote:5-0-0

Absent during the Vote: Vice Chair; Ada Rosmarin

8. Next Meeting Agenda Items

- Updated and approved

Dr. Carroll made a comment that there are a number of questions in the chat. Superintendent Jette screen shot the chat and would share it with the School Committee.

Chair Eberhardt made a motion to adjourn to Executive Session not to return to open session to discuss:

- To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with union and nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with union and nonunion personnel in accordance with Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(2)
- Approval of Minutes

Second: Ms. White

Roll Call Vote: 5-0-0

Absent during the Vote: Vice Chair; Ada Rosmarin

Meeting adjourned 9:32pm.