

Milton School Committee Meeting Minutes
Meeting via Zoom
December 1, 2021
Agenda

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

Staff Present: James Jette, Superintendent of Schools, Janet Sheehan, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Human Resources, Amy Dexter, Assistant Superintendent for Business

1. Call to Order - 7:02pm

2. Approval of the Agenda

Chair Eberhardt made a motion to approve the Milton School Committee Agenda.

Second: Ms. Rosmarin

Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0

3. Superintendent's Report - Superintendent Jette

a. District Updates

- Acknowledgement of the letter that was sent home to all MPS families
- Came to MPS attention yesterday that there was a racial slur made during a sleep over of a student at Pierce Middle School
- Investigation is ongoing
- Well aware of what happened in previous communities
- Want to give an immediate response to Milton Public School Community
- Within 24hrs an investigation took place, parents were called and emailed. A meeting took place with team meetings at school. Meeting held with faculty and staff.
- Milton Police were notified in the event of any new developments
- Staff was informed to monitor students
- This happened outside of school
- In the Milton Public Schools there is not a place for hate or racial rhetoric speech, language or actions
- On a Facetime with another student, a younger student asked what was going on, and a student said the “n” word and a student stated what the “n” word meant
- The situation was videotaped, uploaded on social media and shared
- It was inappropriate, can't allow students to take matters into their own hands

- Let the faculty and staff do their job
- All parents were called that were involved
- Somaly Prak-Martins is involved and working with Dr. Fish, faculty and staff at the Pierce Middle School
- Middle School students are minors, not releasing the names
- Everyone involved needs to be kept safe
- Will continue to deal with the situation
- Can't rush to judgment need to get as much information as possible
- Anytime there is a situation that you are concerned about, MPS has an anonymous reporting site that immediately launches investigations
- Our job to educate students when they cross the line
- Hopefully this incident doesn't repeat itself
- All incidents are taken seriously
- Need to be mindful of words and actions
- Couple of students made a mistake, will work with those students
- Discussion about Restorative Justice
- Reach out to Administration if you have questions or concerns
- Will provide any updates

Ms. Ross Denny

- How many students were involved?
- There was a presentation given to the Pierce Students, asked what the presentation was about

Superintendent Jette replied

- Dr. Fish talked about the situation, the goal was to let the students know that the adults were aware of the situation
- Not sure how many students were involved because the video was shared, still investigating
- Still have a lot of work to do
 - Relationships are very important with our students, faculty and staff
 - Outlets to share

Ms. Ross Denny

- Restorative Justice, it would be helpful for the community to understand what does it looks like to engage in Restorative Justice in this circumstance

- Those students in spite of what they said and given their age, they have relationships with students that could have been offended
- Students can have trouble navigating relationships, in 8th grade don't expect many will run to the counselor's office to ask what to do
- This is a challenging relationship to navigate
- We are in a different place in the district, we now have people trained in Restorative Justice
- It is the what is next for the those kids as they go to school, everyday a long side the child that made the comment
- How can they navigate to say sorry to somebody they have known for 8 years
- Believe she knows the students involved and that they have friends that are students of color that are at a loss. How can they approach their friend
- District needs to provide support

Dr. Carroll

- Have talked about Restorative Justice
- Heard about Restorative Justice from Pierce Administration
- Have seen Restorative Justice listed in our budget, investing as an approach and a practice
- Heard and understand the research supported Restorative Justice
- Sense of urgency of addressing the incident does not mean to communicate before the investigation
- Milton Public Schools became a Anti Racism District
- Have a lot of work to do

Chair Eberhardt

- Heart breaks for the students who were hurt from the video
- As Superintendent Jette said, how do we use this to grow and work as a community
- How can we help each other and be mindful
- Perhaps a Community Forum can be organized around Restorative Justice

Intellispark update – Superintendent Jette

- Survey to assess where our students are
- Two emails were sent to give advance notice about the screener
- Gave examples of questions that will be asked
- MPS will be responsible for the data
- Intellispark is the third party but bound by confidentiality

- Pleaded with the community to have their student involved in the screener
- Need this information to provide support to our student
- The screener is optional

More updates:

- Holiday Break approaching
- Sports taking place
- Clubs are underway
- Taking steps without compromising safety
- Concerned about the new variant, will continue to monitor
- Commend the custodians, faculty, staff, food staff and our nurses
- Nurses are exhausting all their energies to contact tracing, test and stay

Upcoming events:

- Grade 8 Information night
- College Information night
- Winter Concert
- Virtual Coffee Hour

4. Citizen Speak (Policy BEDH-15 Minutes)

Ohene Asare – 70 Sumner Street

- Wanted to speak about the incident presented this evening
- Very important that you are going to address the student and all students involved
- Issues of educating of all students
- N word is difficult but needs to be taught
- Don't blame the kids that don't understand this, blame the education system that does not teach it
- Only came up because some of the black students confronted the student involved
- So scared to talk about it
- Addressing the retaliation and not the issue
- Need to be clear about the Restorative Justice
- Appreciate the efforts of the Principal
- Need to be clear with the students
- Talk the talk, where is the beef, where is the training and the actions, where is the leadership
- Being a parent of one of the students involved this was not handled well
- Disturbing to hear
- Nothing worse than not seeing results
- See nothing on racial reporting on the MPS, needs to be added to the website

Timoria McQueen Saba -17 Brookside Park

- Concerned about the role of Ms. Prak-Martins
- Curious of what her role is as the Director of Equity
- Don't feel like she is visible in the community
- Feel like she should be on the screen with all of your right now
- Why isn't the Director of Equity present and sharing what her role is and what actions are taking place
- The Director of Equity Role is important, don't feel as though she is a visible member of the community
- Big missing part of the puzzle here
- Hired for this reason and her salary is high
- Most Director's of Equity are seen in the school community
- Needs to be the point of contact for community for these incidents
- Looking for the leadership from her and plans of actions
- Very concerning as a parent

Superintendent Jette replied

- Samaly Prak-Martin's daughter was in a car accident this evening and was not available to be present
- Have been communicating with Dr. Fish

5. Finance Subcommittee Report - Dr. Craghead

a. FY23 Budget Presentation

- Met November 30th
- Head Nurse Kim Coughlin came on to this position right before the pandemic, doing a great job
- Kim Coughlin gave a report and request of the nursing staff
 - request one full time nurse and two part time nurses
 - gave great information caring nursing staff in other district
 - gave valuable information on mandating screening, things we could be offering if we had enough staff (individualized health plans)
 - looks like we could get some of the staffing through the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act)
- At the meeting Assistant Superintendent Dexter gave updates with the ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund) that will expire in 2024, Cares Act are gone
- Fully into ESSER and applying for ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act)

Superintendent Jette discussed the FY23 Presentation

- Talked about a budget summary
- Assistant Superintendent Dexter is currently working on salary roll over cost
- 2.5 million dollars that includes the 2% raises
- Met with all principals and department heads to discuss FY23 budget, the needs and what was funded in FY22
- 1.9 million is the need, will start to rank the needs and will report out
- Understand it is a burden
- Enrollment is growing, needs are increasing
- Will share in our upcoming presentation

b. Approval of Vendor Warrants

Dr. Craghead made a motion to approve Vendor Warrant #23 in the amount of \$343,965.63 payable on December 2, 2021.

Second: Ms. Ross Denny
Roll Call Vote: 5-0-1

6. Health and Wellness Advisory Committee Report - Ms. White

- Met on November 19th
- Wellness Policy - Jackie Morgan
- Asking all members to sign up for a committee
- Reviewed and updated 11 goals
- Focus on offering emotional support/wellness and physical activities for teachers
- What is going on for the staff
- Offering a weekly zoom class for teachers perhaps funded through MFE
- Two students have volunteered to be on the committee (both freshman)
 - Advocates for racial and gender equity

7. Facilities Advisory Committee Report - Ms. Rosmarin

- Met November 17th
- Bill Ritchie gave an update on maintenance
- A lot of changes as we learn more about Covid

- Focus on disinfection and filter ventilation
- Windows are still kept open to keep the air moving
- Air changing systems are kept on all night
- Commend the custodial staff for all that they have done
- Talked about planning for additional space
- Recall the short term needs of space due to the overcrowding
- Long term solution is taken by the School Building committee
- Engineering study and architectural design discussed
- Circling back to the community, are there spaces available in the community for rentals for additional space
- Two Articles were approved to be on the February Town Meeting

Dr. Craghead

- Wanted to comment that the Finance Subcommittee approved the Adjusted Capital request from Facilities (Bill Ritchie) for an additional \$150,000 to make more changes in the schools now, taking away some lab spaces for more classrooms

8. Approval of Minutes

a. November 3, 2021

Chair Eberhardt made a motion to approve the School Committee Minutes dated November 3, 2021.

Second: Dr. Craghead

Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0

9. Old Business

Updated

10. Next Meeting Agenda Items

Updated

Chair Eberhardt made a motion to adjourn from the Milton School Committee meeting.

Second: Dr. Craghead

Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0

Meeting adjourned 9:01pm