

Milton School Committee Meeting Minutes
Meeting via Zoom
March 17, 2022

Committee Present: Chair; Margaret Eberhardt, Vice Chair; Ada Rosmarin Dr. Elizabeth Carroll, Dr. Elaine Craghead, Beverly Ross Denny, and 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 - 7:05pm

2. Approval of School Committee Agenda

Approved & Updated

3. Superintendent's Report - Superintendent Jette

a. Special Education Presentation, Susan Maselli -

https://www.miltonps.org/application/files/2716/4822/8398/SC_2022_presentation_1.pdf

Chair Eberhardt

- Wonderful presentation
- Exciting to see the progress of the students, reflect the hard work and dedication of your staff here in Milton

Betty White

- Children on IEPs that were being removed in or out of school, how many on the IEP's had social/emotional or mental health issue that might be a factor of why that was happening

Ms. Maselli

- When the removal is related to the disability, the Special Education Team gets together to talk about it, a lot of the removals are related to drug use, we do not have weapons used but that would fall into this category, and fighting - these situations would require a bigger response
- When a removal is related to an argument, that is when you would see an in school response, don't want kids to be away from instruction

Superintendent Jette

- The drug related comment Ms. Maselli made is usually related with the vaping marijuana
- Take very seriously if a child is under the influence
- Parents/guardians would be called

Ms. Rosmarin

- Thanked Ms. Maselli and staff for the results that we are seeing and how well our Special Education students are doing
- Thankful for you and your team from bringing our Special Ed students back during the pandemic
- Special Education students were the first students back
- Asked about Out of District placement, with the possibility of building a new school we have talked about additional space for Out of District students to come back to Milton for services
- Is there a certain category of need that we would need to address if we had this space

Ms. Maselli

- There are three areas that we will need to continue to talk about program development
 - Building more universal preschool for the district
 - Diversion Program for our high school students - support students in recovery, and a level of mental health needs
 - Neurological combined with language based needs

Dr. Carroll

- Appreciate being able to see the decline in referrals
- Impressed by the details, looking forward to seeing the data unfold
- Asked Ms. Maselli if she could underscore what was said about Equitable Proportional shared (slide 18) as far as the Federal Funding that supports the students - the funding is only available to families for that purpose
- Can you clarify?

Ms. Maselli

- Every district in Massachusetts has an IDEA grant which is a federal grant
- Are required to use a proportion of the grant for students who go to a parent choice school or a private school within our community
- Supporting 5 schools now, Milton and non residents attending those schools are provided services using the grant if they are on an IEP
- Not as robust as their IEP, it is determined a very comprehensive needs assessment for all the schools
- Includes components of their IEP, it gives the families an opportunity to receive services while they attend a Catholic School or school or their choice

- If a Milton family attends a private school in Boston or Randolph, they would have the same opportunity, it is equitable across every town
- It is federal money, it is not flexible on how is it used

Dr. Carroll

- Can you confirm for the community, where Milton is in relations to other districts when it comes to increase in referrals

Ms. Maselli

- Many districts are seeing an increase
- During the pandemic schools were closed
- Lag in evaluations, were able to catch up last summer
- Every town in the Commonwealth has struggled and seeing an increase in Special Education
- Seeing increasing in the Early Childhood program

Chair Eberhardt

- In the presentation you mentioned the increase in awareness on behalf of educators, shows through the dedication of your staff
- Special Education is a complex highly regulated part of education
- Really appreciate your presentation and for communicating with the community

b. Collicot Site Council Presentation -

https://www.miltonps.org/application/files/1616/4822/8410/2021-2022_Collicot_School_Site_Council_Presentation__1.pdf

Ms. Ross Denny

- Thanked everyone on the Collicot Team
- Grateful you provided what good things came out of the pandemic giving families ways to participate virtually
- Also pleased with the formative assessment data, defines reason
- A lot of people came into the school year concerned about the unfinished learning, whether or not the teachers could get the students to catch up and learn
- Collicot should be proud of what was accomplished in several months back to school
- See so few red bars in the data means a lot
- To question about the very few listed in red, what do we know about the students, what do you think it would take to make the red even smaller? Time/ intervention?

Ellen Lohan

- Asked if Ms. Ross Denny was referencing the student in the red (math group)

- Glad the question was asked, this is talked about in common planning and student planning
- Inclusion is an increase goal for Collicot, we are lucky to have three programs within the school
 - Direct partner with New England Center for Children
 - Two Classrooms that are Milton Teachers that focus on a very specific population
- Because we have these personalized learning platforms in order to access to the content on these platforms it is necessary to take a diagnostic assessment
- For some students their IEP does not dictate working on grade level standards in an inclusion classroom every day
- When families reach out and ask about what is a great program to use, we know the district has spent a lot of money on Lexia and Iready, we want the students to have that
- Can break down the diagnostic assessment over time for the students
- Students who were behind were invited to Behind the Bell program during school vacation
- Want all students to be offered the same programs as their peers

Principal Concannon

- Proud of the inclusion program
- More students are included in the MCAS in the program
- Increase of inclusion is more of a celebration

Ms. White

- Thank you for the wonderful and thorough presentation
- Really gives a feel of what your school is like
- Looking at the data, it encouraging to see the students grow in all the different grades
- The foundation on which you focus your school on, social/emotional learning, slides on kindness and the classroom lessons
- Really is the fabric of your school, students feel cared about and involved in your school
- Not surprised in the students success

Principal Concannon

- Because Collicot has a committed and dedicated staff, we are able to do great things

Dr. Craghead

- Thanked all for the thorough and data enriched presentation
- Also wanted to thank Susan Maselli for her presentation as well
- Heartened by the slide shared by Amy Gale on the K-2 gains in Lexia Rapid for Fall 21 - Winter 22 - that was the grade level that has concern with learning loss
- Presentation was encouraging to see

- How are you going to measure the stronger sense of community and welcomeness?

Principal Concannon

- It is difficult to measure with a specific number, but if I were to measure it by the number of families outside Collicot today to greet the bagpiper for the Collicot St. Patrick's Day tradition, it was amazing to see so many people come out to celebrate together
- Parent volunteers have been amazing, attendance high with community/parent engagement
- Statistics of parents who read the Collicot newsletter is high
- Offer parent meets in the morning and the afternoon both in person and virtual
- PTO is always well attended
- True measurement will have to be discuss as a team

Ms. Rosmarin

- Advantage of seeing over the course of the school year, seeing the wave of opening up
- Things are happening again and is heartwarming to see
- Coming back to a new normal
- Collicot has recognized and learned during the pandemic
- Has participation changed in any way by offering remote opportunities during parent teacher conferences?

Principal Concannon

- All the teachers shared their schedules and you could see teachers coming in and out of both in person and virtual conferences
- K-3 believe every parent was in person, it's nice to give the opportunity for remote for parents who work and can't make the conferences in time

Chair Eberhardt

- All the teachers should receive a hug and pat in the back as well as families
- Collicot did an excellent job explaining personalized learning
- Love what was said about what was happening at school is making its way back home- that speaks to the students experience and connections
- Engagement is increasing
- Red numbers growing because of inclusion is powerful
- Thankful for all, we are an incredible and dedicated district

Dr. Carroll

- Appreciate everything that was presented day in and out
- Noticed the connections between personalized learning, which is how students achieve excellence on their own terms

- Connected to safe and supportive environments
- Students feel safe and supported when they receive the personalized learning
- Exciting and grateful the platforms are paying off, speaks to the wise investments

Principal Concannon

- Anna Curry - 5th grade Collicot teacher also coaches Future Problem Solvers Team - content introduced to all 4th graders
- 3 students from the Collicot team have made it into the qualifying round
- Move on and compete with teams across the state
- Commend the teachers who did not give up and worked through the pandemic

c. District Updates - Superintendent Jette

- Building the culture back to the schools
 - Senior Trivia Night
 - School Concerts
 - Future Problem Solvers
 - Tucker Basketball championship
 - Looking forward to a great end of the year
 - Seniors committing to prestigious colleges
 - Seniors are an exception class
 - Thankful for all the work of teachers, support staff and faculty across the board
 - Appreciate the families for their support and patience

4. **School Building Committee Report** - Ms. Rosmarin

- Presentation link on the MPS website,
https://www.miltonps.org/application/files/3216/4822/8437/2022_0317_SBC_to_School_Committee.pdf
- Sean O'Rourke, Principal Concannon, Principal Fish

Chair Eberhardt

- Can't thank you enough for all the work you have done

Ms. Rosmarin

- Things are happening and moving forward
- Hoping to acquire the land to build, which was the number 1
- Budget needs to be looked at and evaluated to be brought to the town
- Hoping School Committee will be able to do tonight would be to vote the Grade Configuration

a. Discussion of Grade Configuration

Ms. Rosmarin made a motion that the School Committee recommend to the School Building Committee that the construction of a free standing Grade 7-8 school which will include a PreK school wing is the preferred educational objective of the Milton School Committee.

Second: Ms. White

Dr. Carroll

- Curious what Principal Concannon and Principal Fish's perspective was on the transition for the 5&6 grade model

Principal Fish

- We have a problem with our overcrowding
- There is no perfect solution
- Time we have is an asset to us
- Need to make the best decision for our families
- There are a handful of schools in the commonwealth that have made this transition that we can learn from
- Primary challenge is the overcrowding, this proposal helps alleviate that

Principal Concannon

- Hurt to think about losing the 5th grade, it is a very special year in the school
- Now after having time to think about it, now the idea of 5th and 6th graders together would be helpful with their transition to learn together
- Should use our 5th&6th teachers to design the model to help support the students
- Offering the students a diverse experience starting in 5th grade

Ms. White

- More than the kids the parents were anxious about middle school
- 5-6 together is less intimidating
- In many ways it may be an easier transition

Ms. Ross Denny

- Was one of those nervous parents concerned about middle school
- Is our assumption that the 5th grade setting will be similar to what is in now or will they go class to class

Principal Concannon

- Still need to figure it out, wouldn't be able to respond right now about the schedules
- Will need to rely on the curriculum coordinators

Superintendent Jette

- Certification of specific content
- 7-8 being close to the High School campus, we have waiver for athletics
- Pre-K program at the high school
- Expose more high school students to the Pre-K program
- Transition of the middle school camp
- 6th graders now can be so anxious
- Diversifying the schools at an earlier grade
- Families will benefit from the new facility
- Details still need to be worked out, we have time

Assistant Superintendent Sheehan

- Initial proposal was a concern, think the way it has been presented with the research and the pro/cons really limits the concerns now of the transitions
- Agree there are some implications around the certifications, we have time to update and address
- Presentation was very clear and helpful to understand the implications of this configuration

Sean O'Rourke

- Work we have done over the past three years has been a lot
- We have to get this project right

Dr. Carroll

- Response to the presentation, really doesn't make sense to go through process and still have the overcrowding at the middle school
- Understand it has been a journey and why it started as another elementary school
- Glad you were able to think outside the box
- Everything about this new proposal makes sense
- Understand this may be difficult for some parents who will have students in three different buildings
- Have time to be thoughtful with schedules, how it can all be maximized with efficiency for families
- Supporting the motion on the table

Chair Eberhardt

- Lesson from the pandemic helped for us to think outside the box
- While we are thinking about the overcrowding and space needs, it affords us to rethink about our instruction method
- Really providing us opportunities to be innovative and creative
- Will be task of future School Committee
- Real opportunity as a district

Ms. Rosmarin

- Motion has been made and seconded by Ms. White earlier in the meeting.

Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0

b. Update on Town Meeting Article

Dr. Carroll

- Important to understand the land swap, town actually gains conservation land
- Need to make sure people understand the facts about the article

Ms. Rosmarin

- Have scheduled three forums for town meeting members and town meeting candidates
- Sent out from the Town Clerk's office
- Look forward to having the opportunity to discuss this project

5. Citizen Speak (Policy BEDH-15 Minutes)

None

6. Chair's Report - Chair Eberhardt

a. Mid-Cycle Review of District/Superintendent

- Superintendent Jette submitted a document answering questions that were asked at the last meeting
- Would ask that you all review the document and to write a summary of where the district is based on the documents that were in the folder
- Please submit all by March 30th in order to have time to compile with Superintendent Jette

7. Policy Subcommittee Report - Dr. Carroll

a. Second Reading, Policy IC, School Year/School Year Calendar

REDLINE for 3-1-22

IC

SCHOOL YEAR/SCHOOL CALENDAR

The school calendar for the ensuing year will be prepared by the Superintendent after sharing and discussion with the Milton ~~Educators~~^{Teachers} Association and then submitted to the School Committee for approval by May 1st of each year.

The number of days or instructional hours scheduled for the school year will be determined in accordance with the following standards set by the Massachusetts Board of Education:

1. Elementary school will operate for a minimum of 180 days. Each elementary and middle school student will be scheduled to receive a minimum of 900 hours per school year of structured learning time, as defined in 603 CMR 27.02. Time which a student spends at school breakfast and lunch, passing between classes, in homeroom, at recess, in non-directed study periods, receiving school services, and participating in optional school programs shall not count toward meeting the minimum structured learning time requirement for that student.
2. Secondary schools will operate for a minimum of 180 days. Every secondary school student will be scheduled to receive a minimum of 990 hours per school year of structured learning time, as defined in 603 CMR 27.02. Time which a student spends at school breakfast and lunch, passing between classes, in homeroom, at recess, in non-directed study periods, receiving school services, and participating in optional school programs shall not count toward meeting the minimum structured learning time requirement for that student.

State and federal laws require schools to make reasonable accommodation to the religious needs of students and employees in observance of holy days. Mass. General Laws Chapter 151B, section 4 (1A) addresses this issue with respect to employees. With respect to students, Mass. General Laws Chapter 151C, section 2B reads in relevant part as follows:

1. Any student in an educational or vocational training institution...who is unable, because of his religious beliefs, to attend classes or to participate in any examination, study or work requirement on a particular day shall be excused from any such examination or study or work requirement, and shall be provided with an opportunity to make up such examination, study or work requirement which he may have missed because of such absence on any particular day; provided, however, that such makeup examination or work shall not create an unreasonable burden upon such school. No fees of any kind shall be charged by the institution for making available to the said student such opportunity. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to any student because of his availing himself of the provisions of this section.

(Excerpted from memo from Commissioner Jeffrey Riley, August 21, 2021
<https://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.aspx?id=26188>)

In the case of religious holidays that are not recognized with a holiday (day off) in Milton Public Schools:

1. Whenever possible, Milton Public Schools will avoid scheduling district- or school-wide meetings (eg. Kindergarten Information Night) in conflict with a religious holiday, even if it is not a school holiday.
2. Parents/guardians are asked to notify teachers, in advance, when a student is planning to be absent in order to observe a religious holiday. In addition to absence from school, any absence from extracurricular activities, due to the observance of a religious holiday, will be considered as an excused absence.
3. Whenever possible, reasonable accommodations to the religious needs of students and employees in observance of holy days shall be made (eg. in the case of someone who is fasting for Ramadan).

For the information of staff, students, parents and guardians, the calendar will set forth the days schools will be in session; holidays and vacation periods; professional development days; and parent conferences.

LEGAL REFS: [1]

M.G.L. 4:7; 15:1G; 71:1; 71:4; 71:4A; 71:73; 136:12

Board of Education Regulations for School Year and School Day, effective 9/1/75

Board of Education, Student Learning Time Regulations, 603 CMR 27.00, Adopted 12/20/94

CONTRACT REF: Collective Bargaining Agreement

REC'D: NESDEC Adopted: April, 2006

Dr. Carroll made a motion to approve the second reading of Policy IC, School Year/School Year Calendar.

Second: Chair Eberhardt

Roll Call Vote: 5-0-1

Dr. Craghead was absent during the vote.

8. Finance Subcommittee Report - Ms. White

Ms. White

- Last week we met with the Warrant Sub Committee
- Three members submitted their questions
- Assistant Superintendent Dexter did a great job answering all 44 questions submitted
- Have been invited to another meeting Wednesday, Mar 23, 2022

a. Approval of Vendor Warrants - Ms. White

Ms. White made a motion to approve Vendor Warrant #37 payable 3/10/22 in the amount of \$507,195.21.

Ms. White made a motion to approve Vendor Warrant #38 payable 3/17/22 in the amount of \$471,601.62

Second: Ms. Ross Denny

Roll Call Vote: 5-0-1

Dr. Craghead was absent during the vote.

Ms. White asked Assistant Superintendent Dexter to speak about the correction that was made at the Warrant Subcommittee meeting.

Assistant Superintendent Dexter

- Didn't have the opportunity to answer all the questions on the list because they were not financially related
- They questioned the Superintendent salary increase from what was budgeting FY22
 - When Superintendent Jette was interim it was late August, contract was equivalent to 10 months
 - When the budget was put together in the fall, it was budgeting for 10 months and not the annualized 12 month salary amount
 - When compared, it looked like a large increase, but that is not the case
 - The contract is 2.5% not 25%

Dr. Carroll

- Was it just a clerical error

Assistant Superintendent Dexter

- replied yes

Ms. Rosmarin

- Strategic Plan in place for three years
- Goals have been guided by the Strategic Plan
- Will be bringing a revised plan to the next School Committee meeting
- Wanted to be clear that we do know about the Strategic Plan

Superintendent Jette

- The new plan will be more focused and concise

9. Curriculum and Instruction Advisory Committee Report - Ms. Ross Denny

- A lot of the content has been discussed
- This meeting was February 17th and questioned were asked:

- Judaism in our curriculum
 - Is present in the elementary curriculum
 - Culture holidays
 - Appears in the middle school
 - Don't have a topic on organized religion
 - Will meet again next Thursday, can revisit and plan to update the curriculum
- Overview of the Math Curriculum
 - Brain Selig and Dr. Carroll - covered what was shared in the meeting
 - More in depth conversations
 - Process of active evaluating a new Math Curriculum
- Restorative Justice work
 - Where is it going, where did it come from
 - Initiated to identify the African Americans Black students at risk for disproportionality for school disciplinary removals
 - Same sub group flagged in disproportionality in Special Education
 - Sue Maselli has been able to identify Federal aid to address this
 - Goal is to dramatically reduce or eliminate the disproportionality of African American students who are identified for disciplinary removal
 - Pupil Personnel Services created a comprehensive plan using the DESE plan mode for success in response to the discipline work
 - Restorative Justice is one of the strategies that they are using to achieve this goal
 - That would include the Restorative Justice Coach, who has visited all the elementary schools
 - Also funding the Professional Development for Restorative Justice for all MPS Administrators
 - Establish relationships amongst the faculty

10. Approval of Minutes

- a. February 16, 2022
- b. March 2, 2022

Chair Eberhardt made a motion to approve the School Committee minutes dated February 16, 2022 and March 2, 2022.

Second: Ms. Rosmarin
 Roll Call Vote: 5-0-1

Dr. Craghead was absent during the vote.

11. Old Business

None

12. Next Meeting Agenda Item

Updated

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

Second: Ms. White

Roll Call Vote: 5-0-1

Dr. Craghead was absent during the vote.

Meeting adjourned at 10:35pm.