

Milton School Committee Meeting Minutes
September 6, 2023
7pm

Committee Present: Chair, Dr. Elizabeth Carroll, Vice Chair; Dr. Celina Miranda, Mark Loring, Bao Qiu, Beverly Ross Denny, Anna Varghese

Staff Present: Dr. Peter Burrows; Superintendent, Dr. Garth McKinney; Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Human Resources, Dr. Glenn Pavlicek, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations

- 1. Call to Order - 7:06pm**
- 2. Approve September 6, 2023 Agenda**
Updated
- 3. Citizen Speak**

Serene Hamsho

- Here on behalf of Milton Neighbors
- Representing over 300 residents in Milton
- Also here on behalf of my two daughters and an expectant mother
- Here to ask for official days off for Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha on the school calendar
 - Following neighboring school districts (Cambridge and Acton)
- These two holidays are the most sacred ones to more than 2 billion Muslims around the world and the United States
- Hold the same sacredness as Easter, Yom Kippur and the same joy as Christmas
- These holidays are celebrated across our district but remain invisible
- They are mentioned on the school calendar, school principals and staff try to accommodate students but it is still a significant burden for our students/kids
- We wish to observe this day with our families and community while not missing school
- Imagine taking an MCAS exam on Christmas Day, it is exactly the same feeling
- Including Eid, we send a powerful message of inclusion and respect to our Milton students
- It acknowledges their faith and validates their culture identity which is the most important to me
- Makes the students feel valued and accepted in our educational system
- It is a valuable educational opportunity, it allows us to teach our students about the diversity of the world and the importance of cultural competence
- Promotes tolerance and empathy among students
- Understanding adding another holiday to the school calendar requires careful consideration
- We can look to other districts for guidance and best practices

- As a mother, having the day off is the best educational opportunity for our kids because the first question the kids will ask is “why is it a holiday”?
- Urge the School Committee to consider the inclusion of Eid as a school holiday
- We are coming to a crucial election year in 2024 where a Muslim name will be heard all over the news
- Students should be armed with knowledge of their Muslim peers
- Urge the School Committee to recognize this as a positive impact of recognizing Eid as an official day off can have on our community

4. Superintendent Report - Dr. Burrows

a. Back to School Update

Dr. Burrows

- Great start to the school year
- Welcomed staff back on Monday
 - Changed the format of welcoming the staff back
 - Spent about an hour together in the Auditorium
 - Then went outside together, spent time connecting and focused on employee wellness
 - Wonderful set up under the tent out back
- We are now in our second week of school
 - Spent time visiting all the schools
- New Employees in place
- Making sure things are running smoothly and people are getting what they need
- Looking ahead to the school year
- Events coming up
 - Football Game
 - Glow for Gold
 - Sept. 14th 7pm -9pm
 - Blood Drive -Cunningham Hall
 - Sep 22, 2023
 - Glow for Gold Day will be Sep 29, 2023
 - Working with Finance Committee
 - Making decisions early in the year to effect the following year
 - Big part of the budget is staffing, not just the FTEs but how are you utilizing those FTEs
 - A lot of work to do and we have talked about today in our Central Office Leadership meeting today
 - Work to do with our Principals
 - What is happening in FY25 and FY26
- Communications
 - Trying to help to be more efficient
 - Weekly Blog will not be happening this ear
 - It was a big read
 - Looking to have the information more impactful
 - Information communication will be through school principals

- Then there will be monthly Superintendent communication sent out
 - Aware of the email load for staff, just putting together a weekly report
- Central Office is working on make connections between schools
 - Engage as a district
 - Budget process to bring everyone together

Dr. Miranda

- Thank you for starting the school year on a positive note
- Have heard only great things
- Thank you for the leadership and for bringing people together

Member Ross Denny

- Agreed and thanked Dr. Burrows

Dr. Carroll

- Opening Day was awesome
- Heartwarming to hear all the positive feedback from a wide range of faculty and staff
- It was a change of tone and created a sense excitement to work for the Milton Public Schools
- Had a question about the communication piece
 - For families and the role for PowerSchool will that platform be playing a role in the communications to the families or is that a separate system?

Dr. Burrows

- Replied it will, PowerSchool enables us to give parents a much deeper view into what is happening
- Should be help parents have more knowledge about what is happening
- Need to do more outreach to help people understand how to use it
 - Including Open Houses are starting tomorrow
 - Will be in a better place in weeks ahead

Member Qiu

- Is the PowerSchool version the newest to have?

Dr. Burrows

- I assume we have the most recent

Member Varghese

- Does PowerSchool offer tech support in case there are some glitches so we are not constantly calling the school?

Dr. Burrows

- You can contact PowerSchool

- Generally the school district want parents to reach out to the schools instead of the software company in order to help the parents
- We have also purchased TimeClock Plus
 - Allows an employees to login to see how much time they have (sick, personal and vacation)

5. **Chair's Report** - Dr. Carroll

a. Superintendent Evaluation Process

Dr. Carroll

- Continuing our conversations from the Summer Retreat
- Set up clearly planned out process
- Few updates
 - Formally deciding if we are moving forward with a Subcommittee structure
 - Member Varghese, Dr. Miranda and myself moved ahead to have a conversation with Dr. Burrows to bring us one step further in the planning
 - Identifying the two documents that were included in our folder, lengthy documents provided by DESE
 - Documents we will use as we guide our process
 - Create a timeline
 - Discussed with Dr. Burrows a timeline that seems to make sense recognizing that as a School Committee we should be having three Open Meetings to discuss the Superintendent Evaluations throughout the year
 - First Open Meeting where we will approve the Superintendent Goals, propose that will be on September 20th (next meeting)
 - Discuss and vote on the Goals the Superintendent has put forward
 - Then a mid-year check in to assess progress towards the goals - propose that Open Meeting takes place on January 3, 2024
 - 3rd Open Meeting is proposed to be on March 20, 2024
 - Do those three dates work for all of us to be in attendance?
 - Discuss the first 6 pages of the overview that outlines DESE's process, section on page 5 that is discussing the role of the subcommittee of moving the evaluation forward
 - Member Varghese, Dr. Miranda and myself are willing to take a first step in the process
 - What are the pros and cons of the process?

- One pro would be three of us instead of 6 are able to find time, spend time with Dr. Burrows
- Then the Subcommittee would submit a full report back to the School Committee

Member Qiu

- Will not be able to make the March 20th meeting

Member Ross Denny

- Believe this will be a more effective and robust process
- Prior years when the entire committee worked in isolation and then meeting, we didn't have the opportunity to have the in depth discussions and feedback
- Want to ensure that everyone's voice is incorporated, want everyone to have the opportunity to share feedback

Dr. Carroll

- Your point is very well taken
- All 6 members are all ultimately completing the rubric tools which are given to us to participate in the evaluation process

Member Loring

- Generally agree with the premise of trying to complete the evaluation before the School Committee turns it over
- We did not have that when I just joined
- The evaluation of the Superintendent at large seems like the most important thing the School Committee does - everyone is still providing feedback about the Superintendent
 - Is this Subcommittee Proposal, is the Superintendent still coming and presenting about the artifacts to the whole committee?
 - What does the mid-year and the following meeting of the evaluation look like?

Dr. Carroll

- My understanding is that the Subcommittee would be the group that would hammer that out
- Description of who is doing what
- Subcommittee would be the vehicle for receiving and processing the input from members of the Committee that are not on the subcommittee
- Subcommittee will submit a full report to the School Committee during an open meeting
- Would be an opportunity to each time there was a meeting to get input from the other School Committee members
- Want to be clear I did not recall being a part in the evaluation process due to the various transitions

Dr. Burrows

- Page 5 articulates the MASC recommendations
 - Options are to give the Subcommittee some of the work to do, or giving the School Committee the entire process

Member Ross Denny

- Trying to correct a experience we have never had
- That is our disadvantage
- My hope is that through this Subcommittee process there will be a common set of expectations so that when we are reading the rubric we are all thinking about it the same way
- Hope that each year we get better with the process
- We are learning to define our work

Dr. Carroll

- Want to create substantial and transparent systems for the work we are doing as a School Committee
- Is it possible to identify the three members who want to serve on the Subcommittee?
- Who wants to serve on the Subcommittee?

Dr. Miranda

- Two decisions to be made
 - The agreement of forming the Subcommittee?
 - And who will be on the Subcommittee?

Dr. Carroll made a motion to form a Subcommittee of the School Committee to work on the Superintendent evaluation process.

Second: Member Qiu

Dr. Carroll

- Reviewed/read through the Subcommittee process with the School Committee Members

Dr. Burrows

- I have had evaluations that I felt like I received a bunch of individual evaluations which is less meaningful
- The more the process can help if shared by all is more meaningful and helpful

Discussion continued among the School Committee Members around the Subcommittee process.

Motion has been made:

Dr. Carroll made a motion to form a Subcommittee of the School Committee to work on the Superintendent evaluation process.

Second: Member Qiu

Vote: 6-0-0

Dr. Carroll

- Are we ready to decide who will serve on the Subcommittee?

Member Loring stated he would be willing to be on the Subcommittee.

Member Varghese stated she would be willing to be on the Subcommittee.

Dr. Carroll stated she would like to be on the Subcommittee.

Dr. Carroll

- Important to have the dates of the Open Meetings scheduled for the Superintendent Evaluations before the next election

Discussion continued regarding the dates of the Open Meetings in March and April. Will follow up and confirm dates.

b. 2023-2024 School Committee Goals

Dr. Carroll

- Shared the School Committee Goals
- Refined the Goals at the last meeting
- Any additional thoughts?

Member Varghese

- Student Academic Achievement feels generic and does not capture the Personalize Learning
- Made a suggestion to update the bullet
 - After equitably to add “help students achieve at their highest level academically”

Member Ross Denny

- In the absence of Dr. Burrows having the longevity, I’m glad you were able to incorporate something that reasonably reflects the high expectations

Member Loring made a motion to approve the 2023-2024 School Committee Goals.

Second: Member Ross Denny

Vote: 6-0-0

Dr. Carroll

- Would love to share the School Committee Goals with community
- Will include on the website

Dr. Burrows

- Can include in our Communications to the community

c. 2023-2024 School Committee Calendar

Dr. Carroll

- Continue to refine this document
- Key change having added the three workshop/retreats that we will do in October, December and February

Dr. Burrows

- Add four Curriculum Presentations/Reviews/Learning opportunities throughout the year starting October 4th (may need to move to the 18th depending if we have the MCAS results)

Member Ross Denny

- Floated the idea having a time limit on the Site Counsel presentations that may allow you time for other agenda items
- Operating Protocol - what is the direction?

Dr. Carroll

- Will discuss at our next School Committee meeting on September 20th
- Will also work to set up the late October date for the Retreat

6. Finance Subcommittee Report - Member Ross Denny

a. Approval of Vendor Warrants

Member Ross Denny made a motion to approve vendor warrant #2 in the amount of \$38,596.07 payable on July 20, 2023.

Member Ross Denny made a motion to approve vendor warrant #5 in the amount of \$416,265.62 payable on August 10, 2023.

Member Ross Denny made a motion to approve vendor warrant #6 in the amount of \$222,082.81 payable on August 17, 2023.

Member Ross Denny made a motion to approve vendor warrant #8 in the amount of \$949,503.68 payable on August 31, 2023.

Second: Member Loring

Vote: 6-0-0

Member Ross Denny

- Gave an update on the joint Select Board/School Committee Finance Subcommittee that happened earlier today
- Productive meeting
- New Formed Committee
- Received a overview of the towns plan - 5 year financial plan

- Shared some goals that we aspire to have with the budget
- Agreed to have regular joint meetings starting every two weeks starting in mid October
- Will invite members of the Warrant Committee
- Want to make sure we are all working together so we can have realistic expectations

Member Varghese

- Can we set a shared Calendar so we can attend?

Dr. Carroll

- Can ask Charlene to set up a standing calendar

7. School Building Committee - Member Loring

Member Loring

- Met on the August 21st
- Request for services, Owner Project Manager
 - Help manage the construction process
 - Out for bidding
 - Responses are due after the site visits
 - Will be evaluating the submissions
 - Then we can select an OPM
- Moving forward in a similar form for Architectural Services
 - Phase of putting that together
 - Looking to approve and getting out to bid
 - Don't want to delay any further
- Land Swap
 - Sean O'Rourke gave an update to be sure all is ready to move forward within the timeline
 - Staying on top of the paperwork
- Timeline
 - Still discussing
- MSBA update given

8. Facilities - Member Loring

Member Loring

- Met on August 23rd
- Chris Hayden was not able to attend - waiting on an update on what was completed over the summer
- Presentation given by Dr. Burrows and Dr. Pavlicek
 - Compiling information about the schools space/impacts
 - What is most impacted from the over enrollment
 - Working through the process and evaluating reports
 - Looking at short and long term projects until a new school is built

- Working on full day site visit scheduled for September 21st

Dr. Carroll

- Maybe after the report is produced after the site visit we can add it to the agenda at an upcoming School Committee meeting?

Dr. Burrows

- Opportunity to see what people have been talking about, the report will reflect from Principals what the issues and concerns are

Member Ross Denny

- Thank you for the clarification, knowing that if some of us cannot make the site visit we can receive the summary, that is very helpful

Member Loring

- Back to the update
- Continue to talk about how can the subcommittee be most effective
- Discussed upcoming Capital Improvement needs of the existing schools

9. Next Meeting Agenda - Dr. Carroll
Updated

Dr. Carroll made a motion to adjourn from the School Committee Meeting.

Second: Member Ross Denny

Vote: 6-0-0

Meeting adjourned at 8:41pm.