

**Milton School Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**October 4, 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** - 7pm
2. **Approve October 4, 2023 Agenda**  
Updated
3. **Citizen Speak (Policy BEDH-15 Minutes)**  
None
4. **Superintendent's Report** - Dr. Burrows

Dr. Burrows

- Working on the Listening and Learning Forums
  - Working together as part of the decision making
  - Gratifying to hear from people and they are appreciative of the process of the forums
  - Community appreciates being heard and that is important
- Superintendent Role
  - Networking over the past month
  - Annual events through the Superintendent Association
  - Attended the Mass Ready Equity Training with Zakia Jarrett
  - Tri County Round Table
    - Regional Group will meet monthly
    - Talk about issues happening in schools
    - Will meet next week, working with the Dedham, Brookline and that area
    - Smooth transition
  - School Visits Scheduled as part of the Superintendent Entry Plan
    - At Pierce Middle School all day on Monday
      - Helpful to spend time with groups of teachers and students
      - Tomorrow at the High School and will continue to visit all schools
      - Will then visit schools monthly, spending time with Principals, walk through and making connections with teachers
  - Principals and Full Leadership Team
    - Continuing to building a strong foundation on how we work together
    - Powerful, and we are meeting monthly
    - Working to understand how all the pieces fit together

- Problem solving and creating space for everyone to come together and where we want to go together
- Appreciated the work being done

#### Principal's Report

- This will be a monthly report
- The goal is to give you a view from the Principal's perspective
- Give the School Committee a better sense of understanding of the schools

#### Member Qiu

- Do you choose the group of students you want to talk to when you visit the schools or is it done randomly?

#### Dr. Burrows

- At Pierce it was the teachers that sent one or two students down from their classrooms
  - Not an organized group that meets all the time
- Also working with Principal Karen Cahill right now to put together a Superintendent Advisory Team for high school students
  - That group will meet monthly
  - Discuss the student perspective, that is really important as we are making decisions

#### Member Qiu

- Is that group of High School students in addition to the leaders?
  - Dr. Burrows replied yes
- How are these two groups of students going to work together?

#### Dr. Burrows

- There could be an opportunity to work together
- Certain students are drawn to be on Student Council, we are looking to have a reflective group of the student body

#### Member Ross Denny

- Have heard of lot of positive feedback
- Appreciate the thoughtful engaging you are doing with our community members
  - a. Cunningham Site Council Presentation - [Link](#) available on the MPS website
    - Principal Jonathan Redden
    - Bernadette Butler, Early Childhood Ed. Director
    - Andy Young, Assistant Principal/ELA & Math Coordinator

#### Cunningham Site Council

- Shared the presentation slides

#### Dr. Carroll

- Thanked the Site Council for the presentation
- Opened up for discussion and questions

Member Varghese

- As a former Cunningham parent, wanted to say great presentation
- Liked how you defined the pillars and built upon last years presentation
- Appreciate you looking at the data but also looking at kids as kids
  - We tend to get so caught up in the data

Member Qiu

- As a current Cunningham parent, I hear amazing things everyday
  - Kids enjoying going to different classrooms with different teachers
- Appreciate your efforts as leaders for teachers working with the students

Dr. Miranda

- Appreciate the presentation and the way you utilize the data
- Understanding that we all learn differently
- Kids feel like they can troubleshoot

Member Loring

- My children love going to Cunningham
  - And all the staff inside of it, they feel cared for and loved
- DIBELS is now state mandated
  - Are parents getting a report? Is this something they should be expecting?

Mr. Young

- We do have access to the reports but have not shared them at this point
  - We are still analyzing the information and making sure all the test and assessment were completed
  - Data will be accessible at the beginning of next week
  - Not sure if it is a district wide policy that we would be sharing with families or if it is still being discussed?
  - Want to be as transparent as possible with parents
  - Want the parents involved in the learning process with their children
  - If it is not a district wide policy it is certainly something we can share

Dr. Burrows

- It will be district wide policy
- We will talk about it more when we discuss curriculum

Member Ross Denny

- When you talked about who the kids are, making progress and can document it in the data, you have come a long way in the Milton Public Schools
- Thanked the Site Council for their thoughtful presentation

Dr. Carroll

- Appreciate the context around Preschool from Ms. Butler
  - Unique and special program at Cunningham
  - We know how important it is especially when discussing space issues
  - Important for people to know how and why we use space the way we do
  - Preschool has a unique strategy in place for when new students come in, students can start throughout the year when they turn 3 years old
  - Can you confirm you are reserving capacity in the classrooms because of children turning 3 years old during the school year?

Ms. Butler

- Replied yes, that is why we don't fill all the classrooms
- Legally we have to provide those services when the students turn 3yrs
- Try to be proactive as we can, it is a collaborative effort

Dr. Carroll

- Appreciate seeing in the presentation/tables- the resources the School Committee allocates towards the FTE's

Mr. Young

- Just to build off of the statement
  - It is just not impacting those students currently but also once those students complete the six week intervention period they are going onto the same number of new students
  - Math Interventionist new at Cunningham specifically this year, will provide a lot of support to our younger students this year
  - We have had a lot of reading support in the building and it impacts a lot of students

b. [Spring Data Presentation and Curriculum Update](#) - Link on the MPS Website

Dr. Burrows

- The beginning of consolidating all of the information and work that is happening around curriculum and providing a deeper dive around the "why" we are doing what we are doing
- The goal eventually is to have the information around the work we are doing and the data is forming and moving connected together
- This is our reflective cycle
- Looking at a formative assessment will enable us to see better connections between the work and the outcomes
- Want to see a steady progression to where we are going

[Spring Data Presentation and Curriculum Update](#) - Link on the MPS Website

Dr. Garth McKinney; Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Human Resources  
Vy Vu, Director of Data & Analytics

Vy Vu

- Shared the [2023 Spring MCAS](#) Released Results presentation/slides

Member Ross Denny

- Thanked Vy Vu for taking the time to walk through the presentation in detail over two meetings
- Had a question for Dr. Burrows on slide 9
  - Looking at grade 10 ELA, Math and Science subgroups
    - When you have the opportunity to go to the High School, can you find out anything that the students have to share?
    - Surprised to see what is happening in some of the sub groups, would love to hear feedback from the students themselves

Dr. Burrows

- Asked Member Ross Denny if she has heard anything?

Member Ross Denny

- Have heard from teachers and my kids that attendance is an issue
  - Tardiness is an issue
  - Not discussed as a subgroup
  - But is there a compelling reason to be here to put forth the effort?
- Very much a believer in data analysis and asking good questions

Dr. Miranda

- Agreed the sub group does not match what you expect
- Seems to be trending lower compared to the snapshot we had last year

Member Varghese

- When we talked about neighboring districts, I went back to the data from last year and this year we used a different district to compare
  - Is there a reason why you changed that this year?

Vy Vu

- No reason, just used representative examples

Member Varghese

- Have you looked at districts with not as much tax base as we do?
  - For example commercial tax, to see where we fall as well

Vy Vu

- Agreed with Member Varghese
  - Good point, we can go back in and add in some to mirror the district

Member Varghese

- Reference the Asian Sub Group
  - Grade 10 before Covid were 100% meeting expectations
  - Then to 95% then dropped down to 75%
  - Can you explain how big jumps like this happen?
  - Is there something we could be doing differently?

Vy Vu

- The reason why you see a wide swing between some of these subgroups is because they are much smaller
- For example the Asian subgroup in 10 grade only had 20 students
  - In other subgroups there could be up to a 100 students

Vy Vu

- If there are other districts you want to add, we can discuss around this table.
- Would love to hear from anyone

Member Ross Denny

- When we have the last budget presentation and the year before, because of the data being presented - we could have a lot more districts for comparative purposes
- Each one of us has a district in mind
- After looking at the data for two years, the reality is we spend a lot less
- You can not ask for much if you do not have the resources
- Maybe School Committee can come up with their standard list
- Think this data presentation is a great start

Member Varghese

- When going on the school tours a few weeks ago, it was nice to see how learning has changed
- There are so many different services being offered

Dr. Burrows

- Just thinking about the peer districts
  - We have had different comparisons
  - High needs percentage is an important one, helpful to see the DESE Comparable Metrics
  - Potential comparison across the whole metro area

#### Quarterly Curriculum Update

- Slides of the presentation were shared
- Dr. Garth McKinney; Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Human Resources
- Zakia Jarrett, Interim Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging
- Danielle Wetmore, Director of Student Services

Member Ross Denny

- One of things that came up last year was during the Secondary ELA Presentation
  - A firm was hired with calibration efforts, especially throughout the high school grade levels
  - Is there anything you can share about the status of that and what you have seen?

Dr. McKinney

- We can get you an update on that
- Writing was an area focused on the secondary level 6-12, we will be able to share that with you

Member Ross Denny

- In terms of Elementary Math Curriculum Implementation, is there any feedback from the teachers on how they think it went?

Dr. McKinney

- Overall it went well but it was a lot
- That is why we applied for that grant and got the resources
- Teachers and Leaders will go for additional training and bring that back to the group
- Brain Selig is facilitating all of that for the group
- There is still some learning there for the teachers so they are prepared to pass along to the kids

Dr. McKinney

- Next Steps
  - Review Fall data, iReady, mClass, IDEPEL, PowerSchool and SEL Screener
  - Monitor student progress and interventions
  - Examine additional resources for differentiation

Member Qiu

- I have heard alot about the iReady, mClass (etc) . Could you provide a chart of each one and the specific subject it is geared toward?

Dr. Burrows

- Recommended providing an assessment chart K-12
- To see it all in one snapshot

Dr. Carroll

- In the next step piece
  - Dr. Burrows envision this as a quarterly update
  - You will continue to process MCAS and find the implications there, pinpoint areas that need attention

- Is that something we should expect to see at the next quarterly presentation?
- What have you identified based on the data as the key areas to target?
- And what is being done to do that?

Dr. Burrows

- We will bring the Fall data to a point in time of how we are doing
- Would provide a list of what we are doing, a lot of initiatives under way
- How we believe the initiatives are impacting the data that we are seeing
- One thing we will keep coming back to is MTSS
  - Attended a training the other day and the presenter made a statement - said when we think of Equity, we think of all these different things, and Equity is MTSS
  - Tiered Intervention

Dr. Carroll

- Is this something that can take place at Pierce?

Dr. Burrows

- Can look at Pierce and the systems in place
  - How are the students coming into Pierce?
  - What does it look like in the classroom?
  - We all need to be present in the schools, engage and problem solve

Member Loring

- Looking back at the data
  - Pace and recovery seems to be going well for ELA compared to math
  - Is there any specific thing/curriculum that we implemented last year as it relates to ELA?
  - Are we looking at anything specifically this year as it relates to math and getting back to pre pandemic level?

Dr. Burrows

- It would be hard to pinpoint with ELA a significant shift last year that impacted the MCAS scores

Dr. McKinney

- ELA had a common curriculum that they have been using for years
- Math has a new curriculum particularly at the elementary level, it will take some time to build up
- Math is an area we are going to be working on, in time it will produce the same results
  - Take a while to implement and time for teachers to get comfortable with it



- Literacy - we focused a lot on writing
  - Early literacy and phonological awareness
  - Two ELA coaches going around to kindergarten and first grade offering support
  - Have great resources in literacy
  - We now have more resources in math plus the new curriculum - we will start to see the same results

Member Loring

- Overall performance exceeding is still extremely good top 10%
- Math not as good as ELA but that context shared was helpful
- Science MCAS over all was the best out of all the subjects
  - Can you give a comparison between the 5th and 8th grade?
    - Extremely strong in 8th grade but not as strong in 5th grade

Dr. McKinney

- Lack of clarity around instruction minutes
  - New time of learning document
  - All teachers now know the maxim and minimum amount of teaching time in that area
  - Social Studies is now an area that will be tested as well
  - Need to build up teacher capacity, it is a K-8 effort
  - We are making sure all are teaching the same units and spending the same amount of time, so we can have more predictable outcomes

Member Loring

- Is iReady the ELA internal assessment used to monitor?
- How well were our internal assessments aligned with our performances and how confident do we feel moving forward?

Dr. McKinney

- Last year we had Lexia which was really a screener - identify kids that need support
- iReady Reading at the middle school is definitely aligned to MCAS
  - Take that three times a year
- We need other measures between fall winter and spring that are internal so we can identify kids and the performance gaps
  - Is it a curriculum piece or teaching piece?
- How can we look at the district, the grade and the classroom?
  - Analysis across the board
  - This is the next piece we are working on

Member Loring

- Question came up regarding the World Language Program
  - Middle School French Program
    - Is there a French course available to students that were not in the french program K-5?

Ms. Jarrett

- In the Middle School there is only French Immersion

Member Qiu

- Can a student take French in high school that is not a part of the program?

Ms. Jarrett

- Replied yes

Member Loring

- How many AP courses do we offer at the high school

Dr. McKinney

- Principal Cahill text/confirm there are 23 AP courses at the high school

Member Loring

- Are we looking at implementation of AP for all courses?

Dr. Burrows

- We have not discussed anything yet

Member Loring

- Looking at the School by School Comparison Data
  - Tucker is not performing as strongly
  - New Interim Principal in place, how are we supporting him?

Dr. Burrows

- Karen McDavitt is his mentor, he meets weekly going back and forth to Tucker and Glover
- He needs on the ground operational guidance
- Also the central office is supporting him
- Tucker is a new team, we are there to support and problem solve

Dr. McKinney

- Tucker has access to Title I funding, additional opportunities there

- 3 additional Special Educators this year at Tucker
- Interventions pieces in place

Membr Varghese

- You had mentioned we are in year 4 of our math curriculum
- What has been feedback over the past 4 years
  - What is the general consensus?

Ms. Jarrett

- There are some real positives aspects to the curriculum
- Offer students multiple occasions to encounter different skills and to practice them repeatedly
- Good measures for collecting data
- I did not love amplify as a teacher, I felt very restricted as a teacher
- There are some real benefits to it but I think it is a little rigid
- Ways to teach students that need a little more support and have structures in place
  - Often times you would need teacher modifications
- Same for kids that need a little push

Dr. McKinney

- Some of the work that we are doing with the Curriculum is K-12
  - Look at what is working and not working
- Finding the gaps and provide the resources
- Based on evidence and data where can we find what is working?

Dr. Carroll

- We are not going to resolve this right now but that is the next step
- Figuring out our ongoing relationship with this information in between the quarterly reports
- Curriculum and Instruction Advisory Committee potentially has a role
- Believe it is on the list to talk about at the Governance Retreat

Dr. Burrows

- Could be a great place with the Finance Sub Committee to prep things, to look at fall data- dig in together, then bring to the quarterly report
- Committee environment where we have more time to dig work and learn together

Member Ross Denny

- Appreciate how much content you covered

- One of the structures we have in place is we focus on only 2 or 3 items, so we could cover as much ground
- But for those priorities it is worth putting it on the agenda, we agreed only to meet 4 times a year at max because there is so much work
- As a committee we can prioritize what would be on the agenda
- Mutually agreed priority list

c. DESE End of Year Report

Dr. Glenn Pavlicek, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations

- Report we have to submit every year to DESE in October
- Breaks down all of the spending that we do
  - By school and by level
  - What comes from town and what comes from grants
- Every district completes
- Reason to vote, every year the School Committee basically has to be informed of the report and given a copy
- Vote is to authorize the Chair to sign on behalf of the School Committee and then submit to the State
- This is what the state uses across all districts

Member Loring

- The School Committee Budget Line items vs Town
  - Can you walk me through what is town revenue and what is School Committee fund revenue?

Dr. Pavlicek

- Health Insurance cost are on the town side
- Consolidation Facilities are on the town
- Town would cover what is not listed in the School Department Budget
- School handles the grants and the breakdown of all the spending
- Computers bought for faculty and students broken down by school

Member Loring

- The school side is the 58 million dollars that is voted on at Town Meeting the other 17 million is the town side
- What are all the schedules listed?

Dr. Pavlicek

- Some have a lot to do with Special Education

- Primary, secondary and transportation
- Different schedules do different things, they linked and can populate others

Member Ross Denny

- Thank you for taking the time to put this together
- A lot of subjectivity
- Appreciate the high quality of work

Dr. Carroll made a motion to approve the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education FY23 End of Year Financial Report.

Second: Member Ross Denny

Vote: 6-0-0

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

### a. School Committee Goals

- Approved the Superintendent Goals the last meeting
- Regarding the Select Board 5 year projection came to our attention after we had approved our goals
- In our conversation last time, with that information we were able to have Dr. Burrows edit his goals in real time and reference that plan
- Our goals which we already approved refer to supporting the work of Dr. Burrows as well working with our counterparts including town government
- Are we good to keep our goals as is, as we approved them?

Member Ross Denny

- Looking at Student Academics Achievement and Wellness
  - The last bullet point it reference securing the financial and physical space resources
  - Even as it is written it is adequate, if we are securing the resources it will reflect the 5 year plan
  - Don't think any edits are necessary

## 6. **Committee Reports**

### a. Finance Subcommittee Report

#### i. Approval of Vendor Warrants

Member Ross Denny made a motion to approve Vendor Warrant #12 in the amount of \$485,033.54 payable on 9/28/23.

Second: Dr. Miranda  
Vote: 6-0-0

Member Ross Denny made a motion to approve Vendor Warrant #13 in the amount of \$638,877.05 payable on 10/5/23.

Second: Member Loring  
Vote: 6-0-0

b. Facilities Advisory Committee Report - Member Loring

- Met on September 20th
- Had full day site walkthroughs on the the 21st of all the schools
- Principals were all very kind to give us some of their time
- Simply looking at the space issues
- Another meeting scheduled to discuss the tours
- The meeting we had on September 20th
  - Chris Hayden was able to attend and share what had occurred over the summer and what the plans were for this year
  - He shared a draft plan FY25 Capital Improvement Projects

c. SC Representative Reports

i. School Building Committee Report - Member Loring

Member Loring

- Met last Monday and Friday
- We have been discussing the overall timeline
- How do we move this forward?
- Funding \$275,000 allocated at Town Meeting
- Sean O'Rourke did a great job creating a document of tracking through of the cost
- Discussed the money needed
  - Do we need to wait until May to ask for more money at Town Meeting or do we need to ask now?
  - The vote was that we need to ask now for more money during the Special Town Meeting in December
  - Committee voted to submit a Warrant, still needs to get approved from the Select Board
    - Asking for an additional \$400,000 in funding
      - For Architectural Services and OPM services, traffic studies, etc. in order to push the project through
- OPM process - still in the middle of bids
  - Committee will be reviewing the bids
- Developing the RFP for the Architects

- Still waiting for word from the MSBA
  - Expect to hear in December
  - If we are accepted their initial notification would be funding around approximately 45%
  - If accepted it could change the other work we are done
  - Will still need to do a financial assessment
  - It will delay the project
  - Not a lot to discuss until we hear back from the MSBA

Member Varghese

- What is the timeline for MSBA?

Member Loring

- Could be 7 years
- We could move quicker than most towns
- Would have to redo some of the process

Member Varghese

- What would the timeline look like without MSBA?

Member Loring

- Tough to say, could be 3+ years

## ii. Milton Foundation for Education - Member Ross Denny

Member Ross Denny

- MFE had a kick off meeting last Wednesday
  - Happy to hear they are accepting grants from teachers through October 20th
  - Also accepting group grant proposals
- Monster Dash is scheduled for October 29th
  - Same kid friendly event, bouncy house in addition to the run
  - There is a T-Shirt decorating contest for the elementary students - deadline to submit the artwork for the t-shirt is October 11th

## 7. **Approval of Minutes**

Dr. Carrol made a motion to approve the minutes of the Milton School Committee meeting of September 20, 2023.

Dr. Carroll made an edit to the spelling of Dr. Miranda's name.

Second: Member Ross Denny

Vote: 6-0-0

8.     **Next Meeting Agenda Items**  
Updated

9.     **Adjourn**

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

Second:       Member Loring

Vote:           6-0-0

Meeting adjourned at 9:47pm.