

Milton School Committee Meeting Minutes
Milton High School Cable Access Studio and Via Zoom
December 20, 2023

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** - 7:04pm
2. **Approve December 20, 2023 Agenda**
Approved
3. **Citizen Speak (Policy BEDH-15 minutes)**
None
4. **Superintendent's Report** - Dr. Burrows

Dr. Burrows

- Priority Report - turning into a very large document
 - Will be concise and clear as possible
- How do we move forward with the Priority Report and start engaging with staff?
 - What does this mean and where are we heading?
 - Full Professional Development Day in March - bringing the entire staff together
 - Designing work throughout the day in small and large groups throughout the day
 - Will be a powerful and important day with staff
- Tucker Principal, Director of DEIB and Assistant Superintendent Positions available and screening committee's are being put together
- Tucker Principal Position - application process closes today
- Dr. Garth McKinney has been spending time at Tucker and has been working with community outreach

Dr. Garth McKinney - Tucker Update

- Hosted two Community Coffee and Conversations
- Keeping the community updated of what is going on with the Principal search
- Discussing staffing changes (new music teacher, BCBA, etc)
- Will meet with the community monthly to discuss

Dr. Burrows

- Had a meeting with Curry College - talked about the potential of leasing the early childhood center
- Started to share in the meeting of what this can look like
- Exciting news
- Moving toward happening - looking for space for quite some time
- A lot of growth with the Curry partnership

Dr. Miranda

- Can you remind us of the classroom space at Curry?

Dr. Burrows

- Curry has a 6 classrooms
- We currently have 8 classrooms
- Need to talk about what makes the most sense for our staff and the benefits for our students
- It is a great space, it is a big improvement over our current space
- Bernadette Butler is looking at all the factors, communications and benefits
- Want to share with parents on the preschool information night

Member Ross Denny

- Curry College space is beautiful, have a nice play yard and plenty of parking

Dr. Pavlicek

- Met with the Town Administrator today and Town Council
 - Believe there is a reasonable way to accomplish this without going through the RFP process
 - Looking at the process - have to show that there are no other comparable places in town
 - Have a path forward to potential be in there next fall
 - Reaching out to DESE, discussing compliance

Dr. Burrows

- Talking about a 5 year lease
- Good steps for the town and Curry financially

Member Loring

- Do you have a date that we need to get through all of these steps?

Dr. Burrows

- Programmatic piece is the most time sensitive
 - Communications is the first deadline with the parents
- Work that Dr. Pavlicek is doing with Town Council is straightforward

Dr. Pavlicek

- Working on the cost, do not have a number yet

Dr. Burrows

- This is a benefit to both Curry and MPS

Member Ross Denny

- Is there feedback from the Tucker Site Visits?
- Can you share some feedback and suggestions our Tucker families have shared?
- Is there a plan to act on, if you can't share at this meeting can you share in January?

Dr. McKinney

- Dr. Carter put out a bulletin/Flyer to families
- Can expand at the next meeting

Dr. Carroll

- Did see the flier and was good to see the response to questions raised
- Shared the Tucker Site Council presentation link
- Provided more information about the after school enrichment and clubs
- More information in January would be great

Member Loring

- Asked Dr. Carroll to forward the flier/information from Dr. Carter

Member Qiu

- You mentioned there would be 6 classrooms available; do you know how they are going to be used?

Dr. Burrows

- Walk throughs are taken place to discuss the classrooms
- Options to shift and change the space
- Looking at the needs of our students
- Some square footage requirements needed

Dr. Burrows

- Working on the MPS website and links available
- Presentation meetings scheduled with website companies
- Plan to have a communication hub

b. Final Approval of Pierce Middle School Trip to Washington, DC

Dr. William Fish - Field Trip document shared:

Milton Public Schools

Field Trip Final Approval Request

(To be submitted to Principal at least thirty (60) days prior to the trip)

Name of Field Trip Coordinator: Mr. Jake Smith, Social Studies Teacher Date: 12/6/23
Dr. William Fish, Principal

Student Group Participants: Pierce Middle School Grade 8

1. Detailed Itinerary of Field Trip Including Educational or Athletic Activities, Accommodations, and Travel Arrangements
 - See attached schedule; hotel accommodations will be finalized upon booking
 - Travel arrangements made by Nations Classroom
2. Description of How the Safety of Students will be Maintained
 - There will be approximately a 12:1 student to chaperone ratio throughout the trip.
 - Security personnel provided by Nations Classroom, the travel vendor, will monitor the halls of the hotel overnight.
3. Planned Adult Supervision
 - Each chaperone will be responsible for each of the students (up to 12) in their group. It is expected that 22-25 faculty members, including at least one administrator, will attend the trip. Nations Classroom will provide one educator/tour guide for every 10 students.
 - The principal (or designee) will serve as the direct line of communication between the field trip participants, families, and the superintendent.
 - Nation's Classroom provides wristbands with a phone number for students to call if they are separated from the group. The person at that number will have direct contact with the tour coordinator and the group.
4. Detailed Budget Including Receipts and Disbursements Anticipated
 - Student cost is \$1289, which includes flights, hotels, and all necessary site admission prices.
 - Students will be participating in a number of fundraisers, including but not limited to:
 - Yankee Candle
 - Midland Fundraiser (Cookie Dough company)
 - The Pierce Middle School PTO plans to continue its support of the trip through a donation.
 - Outreach to local businesses to support scholarships for students in need.
 - Nations Classroom will provide one scholarship for every 50 paying students. Scholarships can be distributed as full or partial scholarships.

5. Statement that All of the Above Details have been Provided to the Parents and Students, and Written Approval for the Trip has been Granted from the Parent or Guardian of Each Student Involved and All Pertinent and Emergency Information has been Provided.
- All parents/guardians will receive the above information during an informational meeting. Additionally, a mandatory trip meeting will be held later in the spring. Parents/guardians of all participating students will furnish permission for their child to attend the trip by enrolling their student via the Nations Classroom website. A Pierce Middle School Field Trip Permission Form and medical form will be collected from each student at the time of the mandatory spring meeting.

Member Ross Denny

- Commented that it would be nice for current 10th grade students to have a trip to Washington DC because they missed it during their school year at Pierce

Dr. Carroll made a motion to approve the Pierce Middle School Field Trip to Washington, DC - May 22, 2024 - May 24, 2024.

Second: Dr. Miranda

Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0

- a. Collicot Site Council Presentation -
- Presentation Link available on the MPS website
 - Presented by Principal [Holly Concannon](#) and Assistant Principal/Curriculum Coordinator [Ellen Lohan](#)

Member Ross Denny

- You are doing a great work and thank you for taking the time to present

Dr. Miranda

- Thank you for speaking to the attendance issue and noting how you are handling it
- Prompts difficult conversations and you are getting ahead of it

Member Loring

- Agree with Mr. Miranda, attendance is a statewide issue
 - Commissioner has sent out communications on the importance of addressing the issues with families
 - We have talked about it as well, talking about it with families, district and town wide
 - Still not back where we were pre pandemic - how can we help kids improve if they are not are not present
- Do you have current rates on how many kids are on track to being chronically absent this year vs. last year?

Principal Concannon

- Our first month we sent out 45 letters - that is 5 days absent
 - We know if you have had strep throat or Covid, 5 days is not unreasonable

- The attendance letters are just a reminder
- We are sending less and less every month
- We have single digits of students that we most likely end up chronically absent this year
- Actively working with families
- We do our best to support our students while at home
- Have noticed as a team that students that have been chronically absent have been referred to special education and are not qualified
 - It is not a learning disability it is time lost on learning
 - A skills deficit but not a need for special instruction
 - Lack of time on task and not a disability
 - Definitely showing as a pattern on our data
- We have work to do with the attendance and time to get back to work
- There is a real focus on mental health and will continue to support our students

Dr. Burrows

- As mentioned the Commissioner has communicated attendance is an issue state wide
- What are we doing regarding family outreach and engagement?
 - Networking and reaching out to agencies supporting families
 - Have to focus on the attendance number but also about community wellness

Member Loring

- A lot of the attendance work is individualized and the relationship between teachers, school administrators and counselors supporting families
- At the same time the numbers are drastically above what they were in 2019
- Result of Covid, keeping kids home and more over protective
- How do we pivot back to get the kids back into the building?

Member Ross Denny

- Is there a way to ensure the students have access to the content without over burdening the teachers?

Principal Concannon

- It is a challenge - our Beyond the Bell Programming has been really helpful
- We are doing our best to support to provide support
- We are seeing improvements

Member Qiu

- Your school provides so many awesome programs that I have never heard about (homework club - free of charge) and the before school math league

Principal Concannon

- Math League has been around for a while, believe Cunningham runs it as well
 - Linked to the Continental Math, helps build math confidence and exposure
 - Enrichment opportunity

Member Qiu

- Do you see any correlation between the students that participate in the before math league and the MCAS scores?

Principal Concannon

- Definitely would be correlation between the before school math league and Continental Math
- Most of the children that attend our math league are high performing in mathematics
- Can be fun for the students even if families are making the child participate

Member Qiu

- How many programs are run by staff and how many are run by volunteers?
- How do you balance?

Principal Concannon

- Centrally staff is at the heart of the planning
- Our family volunteers help us with the before math league, this is completely run by families
- Meet the Artist is an exceptional program run by Art Teachers from Milton
 - Opportunity for families to come into Collicot to teach art written by our teachers
 - Time for the teacher to support the families and student
- Beyond the Bell - run by staff
- CASS Class - run by staff
- We have exceptional families that support us as well as PTO

Member Qiu

- Are the teachers paid through funding from the PTO?

Vice Principal Lohan

- CASS Teachers are paid through the tuition students pay to attend the classes
- Scholarships and 1:1 support is also available
- 6 children in a class to pay the teacher

Dr. Carroll

- Heartwarming to hear about these wonderful opportunities for our students
- Maybe as a district we can work on making sure that all schools have these opportunities
- Maybe a discussion the leadership team can have
- Congratulations to you all on the 5th grade pilot - exciting to see the results
- What is the process to take the innovation and take it to the leadership level?
- Would love the benefit of these innovations from Collicot to benefit students across the district

Member Loring

- Can you talk about reverse inclusion vs. traditional inclusion?

- What are the different goals of these two models?

Principal Concannon

- Always want students to be included in general classrooms as much as possible
 - Some students are not ready to do so
 - Students can be included at lunch, snack, gym and music
 - As the year goes on, interacting in an environment that is comfortable and safe for students
 - Students volunteer to give up recess to play boards with students that maybe verbal and nonverbal
 - Do need permission from parents in order to participate
 - The more children have the chance to participate in reverse inclusion the more comfortable they are with students that are different from them

Member Loring

- How do you identify students who receive Tier II intervention support vs. the receiving support through individualized learning opportunities within the classroom?

Vice Principal Lohan

- Such a fluid process
 - Beginning of the year we use our Dibbles and iReady data
 - Involved Curriculum Directors (Cat DesRoche and Brian Selig) look at the benchmark and if students fall below and would they benefit from time with an interventionist?
 - Share the list with teachers for feedback
 - Want to be sure we are on the mark
 - Typically do about 8 weeks with the interventional and then may no longer need and another student may be invited to join the group
 - Very fluid process based on data
 - New data expected in January

Member Ross Denny

- Congratulations on the DESE Designation
- Proud to know that the work that you are doing is reflected in your data

c. Student Advisory Report - Member Qiu

School Committee Student Representatives: Julia Mangum (senior rep), Sydney Burns, Elias Caros (sophomore rep), and Adam Cheairs

- Sydney Burns and Adam Cheairs were present (via zoom)

Member Qiu

- Met with teachers advisories and student representatives from each grade level
- Talked about what we can do together as a productive group
- Shared hot topics (including the school year calendar) and possibility included another holiday

- Asked them to collect data from their peers
- Invited them to come the meeting this evening via zoom

Sydney Burns - Junior Representative

- Introduced herself

Adam Cheairs - Freshman Representative

- Introduced himself

Member Qiu

- Thanked the student representatives for attending and for their collaborations

Dr. Burrows

- Great the student representatives have been a part of the conversation around the school calendar, this will widen the School Committee conversation

Dr. Carroll

- Would be great to set up a cadence
 - Help plan our agenda's to include the student representatives
 - Discuss how often would the student reps like to attend the meetings

5. Chair's Report - Dr. Carroll

a. Town Meeting Update

- We were all present at town meeting
- Discussed School Building Committee - approved the \$400,000 allocation to continue its planning toward the site
- Discussed Article 6 - regarding recording of meetings
 - Article was deferred and sent back

6. Committee Reports - Member Ross Denny

a. Finance Subcommittee Report

i. Approval of Vendor Warrants

Member Ross Denny made a motion to approve the Vendor Warrant #23 in the amount of \$656,279.83 payable on 12/14/23.

Second: Dr. Miranda

Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0

Member Ross Denny made a motion to approve the Vendor Warrant #24 in the amount of \$456,291.93 payable on 12/21/23.

Second: Member Loring

Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0

ii. FY25 Prioritized Budget

Dr. Burrows

- Finance Sub Committee met today to present Level Service Budget and have already discussed and presented the Budget Needs
- Now time to bring both budgets forward to the School Committee for conversations
- Moving for action from the School Committee in January
- Working closely with the town which has been helpful

Dr. Pavlicek

- Presented the Milton Public Schools FY25 Budget Proposal Slides

Dr. Burrows

- Currently discussing student fees (preschool through 12th grade)
- More conversations to be had

Dr. Pavlicek

- Curry College conversations still happening - there will be lease payments and need to discuss custodial staff
- Will need an Administrative Assistant on site as well - most likely a new hire
- Waiting on the lease proposal

Member Ross Denny

- Appreciate that you were able to create a budget with the leadership team that reflects the needs of the district
- Working with the Warrant Committee, good thing here is that there are no surprises here
- Preliminary feedback from various stakeholders has been, our budget is reasonable
- Nothing here that conflicts what has been shared

Dr. Pavlicek

- With your permission, I will give this budget to the Town Administrator, he is in the process of putting together spreadsheets for the town
 - This is not the final budget but gives him some numbers

Dr. Miranda

- Is there a slide that we could add at the end that it would add it all up
 - To help understand what the Level Service Budget would be plus the systems base

Dr. Pavlicek

- Replied yes

Member Loring

- The Warrant Committee has to close January 17, 2024; does that mean the Town Administrator has to have the draft budget completed by January 17th?

Dr. Pavlicek

- Replied no, the Town Administrator has to the end of January to give to the Warrant Committee
- If we wanted a separate article, that would have to be submitted by January 17th
- Warrant Committee does have the ability to open the Warrant again

b. Policy Subcommittee Report - Member Varghese

- In the process of preparing and updating policies that will be presented at a later date to School Committee for review
- Eventually these policies will be available on the website
- Need to be in compliance with DESE compliance

c. School Committee Representative Report - Member Loring

I. School Building Committee

- Met this past Monday
 - Discussed project timelines, OPM on board and helping to run the meetings
 - Process of the RFP to select an architect for the project
 - Walk through happened last week with some architects
 - Early in January is when the deadline will be
 - Talked about the timeline of the subcommittee of the School Building Committee as well as members of the school district
 - Town Reps will meet as they did with the OPM to take all the proposals and twiddle down to a list of three
 - Then the School Building Committee will select the architect
 - Hoping to have an architect selected by February
 - Funding Article was passed, incorporated the money we have allocated included in the RFP
 - Land swap - we had a visit from Walter Timilty
 - Timilty's office is waiting on us to submit some finalized land swap paperwork
 - Need to get the approval from the State Legislature
 - Just received the appraisals last week, believe we have all the pieces needed to submit
 - MSBA update - Milton was not selected
 - Invited to apply again
 - Next deadline is April

7. Approval of Minutes

Dr. Carroll made a motion to approve School Committee Minutes dated December 6, 2023.

Second: Dr. Miranda

Roll Call 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: Dr. Miranda

Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0

Meeting adjourned at 9:40pm.