

Milton School Committee Meeting Minutes  
In Person @ Milton High School Cable Access Studio and Via Zoom  
February 28, 2024

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. Glenn Pavlicek, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations

Absent: Dr. Garth McKinney; Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Human Resources

1. **Call to order** - 7:04pm
2. **Approve February 28, 2024 Agenda**  
Updated

Milton High School Program of Studies - Principal Cahill

2024-2025 Program of Studies was shared at the last School Committee Meeting.

Dr. Burrows

- Looking at the Math trajectory, can you describe from 9th to 12th grade how students can select in and out of different math courses?

Principal Cahill

- Overall the chart shared is the normal trajectory for students
- There are always diversions to the pathway - but those are conversations students would have with Mr. Selig and Math Teachers
  - Depending on the students background in math

Member Loring

- In the pathway - are students able to take both AP Calculus and AP Stats?

Principal Cahill

- Yes, students are able to take both
- 4 years of Math is a requirement
  - For some students, AP Stats can be an elective

Member Loring

- On the previous chart, 9th graders had taken course I or course II (due to placement test)
  - Is that still the case with the proposal?

Principal Cahill

- Mr. Selig works with the 8th grade math teachers to address any appropriate math placements for students
  - Algebra and Geometry Statistics
- Looking at the exposure the students have prior to going into course II to be sure they have the foundation to be successful

Member Qiu

- Looking at the graduation requirements
  - Language requirement is not listed but is a part of our curriculum
  - Are we thinking about adding a language requirement or not?

Principal Cahill

- Yes, absolutely looking at the big picture and on the master plan
  - At least add 2 years of a language for a graduation requirement
- Will stress to families that although we do not have a language requirement, the state of Massachusetts for state colleges requires at least 2 years of a foreign language at the high school level
- 85% - 90% meet that language requirement because they continue on the track
- Most of our students exceed the requirement with 3 to 4 years of a foreign language
- Definitely would like to explore more

Member Qiu

- The World Language department only offers three European languages, will there be a conversation about offering languages other than French, Spanish and Latin?

Principal Cahill

- We have had those conversations over the years
- Comes down to staffing, funding, availability and interest
- We have a more global population so should look into expanding our languages

Dr. Carroll made a motion to approve the Milton High School 2024-2025 Program of Studies.

Second: Member Loring

Vote: 6-0-0

**3. Citizen Speak (Policy BEDH-15 minutes)**

None

**4. Superintendent's Report - Dr. Burrows**

- School Building Committee has met and putting together a District Team to plan what our new school will look like
- Fast paced and working with the Architect
- Exciting to finally move along
- March 5th - Professional Development
  - Presenting the Priority Report to all staff

- Quick overview and engaging everybody in both reflecting on the report and their work at MPS
- Where do we need to spend time in the years ahead?
- Essentially having all staff being apart of building the direction and vision moving forward
- Website and Communication Software
  - Met today, trying to get the cost down
  - Creating a new infrastructure within ways to communicate
  - Also looking at the Logo work

Member Ross Denny

- Is the Priority Report the updated version of your Strategic Plan you have been working on?

Dr. Burrows

- The Priority Report is the Listening and Learning portion of my entry plan
- Forums, survey's, individual and group meetings
- Share an analysis section
  - Academic Excellence
  - Climate Culture
  - Wellbeing
- Looking at where are we currently
- Future directions
- Looking to have staff reflect on the Priority Report
- High level overview

Member Ross Denny

- Is the plan to take the feedback to update or create the Strategic Plan?

Dr. Burrows

- Have ideas of how the Strategic Plan could adapt to what the findings are
- What our staff and community are saying
- Implementation planning to be completed by summer
- A lot of work to do internally

Dr. Carroll

- You are processing with the staff then sharing with the School Committee at the March 6th School Committee Meeting?
- And then Community engagement opportunities?

Dr. Burrows replied yes

a. Personnel Updates

i. Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations - Catherine Blake

- Resume shared
- Due to start July 1, 2024

Catherine Blake

- Introduced herself and discussed background
- Looking forward to working with the Milton Public Schools
- Excited to be here

Member Loring

- Unanimous positive feelings from the hiring committee
  - You offer great experience and skill set

The School Committee welcomed Catherine Blake.

iii. New Consolidated Facilities Director - Tom McCarthy

Tom McCarthy

- Shared his experience and background with the Town of Milton
- Discussed transition with working with Chris Hayden, Bill Ritchie and Bob Mayhew
- Excited to take on this role

Dr. Carroll

- Great to have all of your experience being brought into this role

c. Cunningham 4th Floor Design Update

Dr. Burrows

- Work underway of what can be done on the 4th floor of Cunningham
- Spoke with Principals and staff at both Collicot and Cunningham to discuss all the needs and priorities
- Interventions, break rooms, classrooms and look at everything needed
- Information is being shared with the Architect

Dr. Pavlicek

- Toured and talked about the 4th floor space with the Architect, Chris Hayden and Bill Ritchie
- Looking at the Library space
- Drawing out what the possibilities might be

Dr. Burrows

- We are in the idea phase

- Talking it out with the Principals and receiving their input
- Depending on the funding
- Feeling hopeful

d. Special Education Task Force - Danielle Wetmore

Danielle Wetmore

- Shared the Special Education Update Slides - Presentation Slides link on the MPS website

Dr. Miranda

- 65 Students mentioned that have been placed out of district
  - Hoping the space limits do not prevent the planning of bringing the students back into the schools
  - Look to frame differently
  - If space is not the issue, how do you plan to bring students back?

Danielle Wetmore

- Looking at our students with Reading disabilities and on IEP's
  - Least restrictive environment research shows that students make more progress when included
- Looking at the Student Programs and looking at where students are and the students needing that pull out support
  - Add class support
  - Take space out of the conversation
  - Will start to see out of district decreasing over the next couple of years

Member Ross Denny

- Congratulations on being so proactive
- Engaging with the SEPAC and being thoughtful about a task force
- Has there been any discussion with the task force on how to create a community for students as they age and things become more challenging socially?
- And that environments are created for students to be together with other students to build healthy and successful relationships?

Danielle Wetmore

- This has not been specially talked about with the task for but has been discussed with SEPAC
  - Have discussed creating that community for students to feel that sense of belonging
  - Work in progress

- Have had those difficult conversations that all of our students have the right to participate
- Destigmatizing and talking about our students are all of our students
- How to we find ways to engage all of our students and give all students access as appropriate
- This includes our out of district students
  - How do you give them access to activities taking place?
  - Can we adjust our times to support students?
  - Want all students to be part of the community, the goal is to have out of district students come back to the school community
  - Should be the top of the priority list

Member Ross Denny

- Maybe there could be ways for the community to be in partnership with the town
  - Work with the task force
  - Glad it has come up and being discussed

Danielle Wetmore

- Not having a sense of community for the out of district students who have been out of the school for so long brings a sense of urgency to have this on our radar

Dr. Carroll

- Thank you sharing the presentation and updates
- You are opening up meaningful opportunities for students to be included
- Thank you for being ahead of the curve and raising the bar

Danielle Wetmore

- Everyone is looking and striving for ways to help support students

Member Varghese

- Being on the task force has been awesome
  - Enjoy working with a room full of people who are full of passion and want to work together
  - Looking forward to our next task force meeting

## 5. Committee Reports - Member Ross Denny

- a. Finance Subcommittee Report
  - i. FY25 Budget Development

Member Ross Denny

- Met yesterday and the entire committee was present

- Received a brief overview from Dr. Burrows and Dr. Pavlicek about the status of the budget and the feedback they have received from the Select Board
- Having our Budget Forum Hearing Meeting next Wednesday, March 6, 2024
- As a committee, we agreed that it was appropriate to go beyond the Roll Over Budget and have an honest discussion about the Needs Based Budget
  - Took on the responsibility to
    - Ensure the opportunity to speak with the Town Administrator about our request for a Needs Based Budget
    - Talk to our community
    - Pursue an override
- Optimistic that if there are any opportunities to fund some of the positions listed in the Needs Based Budget that we will pursue that with the town
- It was our decision, voted on unanimously, that we would go to make the formal request that the Needs Based Budget be supported by the Select Board
- Appreciate the advocacy and leadership of all of you

Dr. Carroll

- Just one note from the meeting yesterday
  - We will be posting on the MPS website - Under School Committee
  - Providing helpful overview
  - School Budget Hearing will be March 6th at 6:45pm before the School Committee Meeting

Member Ross Denny

- We walked through our request of the Select Board
- We are out performing districts but under spending
  - We are asking staff to do a disproportionate amount of work, less efficiently because we are understaffed

Member Varghese

- Do we have an opportunity to make a request for an override in the spring?

Member Ross Denny

- We can advocate for our budget with the Select Board and ultimately they make the decision for the override
- The budget is not final, not sure there is an overall support of an override at this time
- As long as the vote is not final, we have opportunity to discuss things further

Member Varghese

- When would that be, would that be next week?

Dr. Carroll

- After attending the Select Board meeting last night, fair to say the discussion maybe not favorable for an override this year
- Recognizing there are unmet needs across the town
- Select Board were discussing the context of starting the override conversation for next year
- Our recommendation to the town is the Needs Based Budget

Member Ross Denny

- Would recommend people attend meetings and share their feelings

Member Varghese

- Looking at the list of needs and don't see how any of this can be put off for another year
- We should do what we can to advocate for the students
- Hope there is an opportunity to make a case and have them reconsider

Member Loring

- Feels like we need to reassess our budget timeline
  - How can we have these conversations sooner?
- Our students should not be punished because there are other priorities
- A year is long time to wait for a student
- Gone through the data of how poorly we fund our schools

Member Ross Denny

- The version of the Budget was prepared in December and it was delayed (not by our doing)

Member Loring

- Do appreciate how we have got to a Level Service Budget - don't want to disregard that progress that has been made
- Disheartened how quickly the idea of trying to advocate for additional funding by the town was dismissed
- This is not a wish list, this is what do our kids need

Member Ross Denny

- We can do better, we have a number of strong elected officials and a strong community
- We can figure out, amazing what people can do when there is an incentive

Dr. Miranda

- We are at a pivotal moment as a district



- We have great leadership
- New members are coming with great aspirations and vision with skills to deliver
- If we can make a systemic change that is going to set us up for greater success, we should not be settling or comprising of what we can do
- We have a leader who wants to guide us and we need to equip the leadership
- Should be able to move forward in a way that will make us proud
- Encourage people to show up, email, call and be a part of the process

Dr. Burrows

- Funding public education is problematic
- As mentioned - thinking around the strategy and the process we follow
  - We naturally convert to year to year thinking
  - We can't continue year by year - where is the budget right now?
  - Need to be funding the vision - hard to do but need to be bringing that conversation to town and to make the impact

Member Ross Denny

- Would like to give Town Administrator Nick Milano credit, he did share a three year funding plan in January when we were talking about an override
- It was the better plan because it reflected what we knew to date need to be funded
- It was a responsible budget and would not mind revisiting the plan
- Encouraged the community to review the plan

Member Varghese

- Agreed with Member Ross Denny
- Remembered the presentation having a lot of detail
- The unknown talks yearly of the override
  - Should discuss what is the plan, what are we trying to work towards?
  - Look at the results associated with the plan

Dr. Pavlicek

- If you look at the town's budget
  - 3 of the places you see the most positive effect are the places we actually did long range planning

Member Ross Denny

- Good work happens when we make the investments

ii. Approval of Vendor Warrants

Member Ross Denny made a motion to approve Vendor Warrant #31 in the amount of \$248,806.31 payable 2/8/24.

Second: Member Loring

Vote: 6-0-0

Member Ross Denny made a motion to approve Vendor Warrant #32 in the amount of \$774,067.12 payable 2/15/24.

Second: Dr. Miranda

Vote: 5-1-0

Member Ross Denny abstained from the vote.

b. Policy Subcommittee Report - Member Varghese

Member Varghese

- Had our Policy SubCommittee meeting yesterday
- Shared meeting notes with the School Committee Members
- Will be bringing updated policies 1st Readings to the next School Committee Meeting

Member Varghese made a motion to approve the second reading of the following Section A policies with the suggested edits, deletions, and additions.

i. Second Reading for the following policies:

- Policy AA, School District Legal Status
- Policy AB, The People and their School District
- Policy AC, Nondiscrimination Policy including Harassment and Retaliation
- Policy AC-R, Procedures for Responding to Complaints of Discrimination
- Policy ACA, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Gender
- Policy ACAB, Sexual Harassment
- Policy ACE, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability
- Policy ADDA, Background Checks
- Policy ADDA-R, DCJIS Model CORI Policy

ii. Deletion of the following policies:

- Policy ACAB-R, Grievance Procedure for Complaints of Sexual Harassment under Title IX
- Policy ACG, Complaint Procedure
- Policy ADA, Development of District Objectives
- Policy ADB, Drug Use
- Policy ADD, Environmental Health on Safety of School Facilities

iii. Rename the following policies:

- Policy ACH, Bullying Intervention to Policy JICFB, Bullying Intervention
- Policy IHAMD, Wellness Policy to Policy ADF, Wellness Policy

Second: Member Qiu

Vote: 6-0-0

d. School Building Committee Report - Member Loring

Member Loring

- Had a School Building Committee Meeting on Monday
  - Identified Arrowstreet Architects and passed along the Select Board which was approved
  - The Architects provided a timeline (we asked for an aggressive date) and they came back with a timeline completion date of August 2027
  - Shared the summary of the timeline with the School Committee
- Team Development
  - Community engagement
  - Arrange school and site visits
  - Identify resources
  - Start to prepare a plan to bring to the town

Dr. Carroll

- We will invite Sean O'Rourke to attend an upcoming School Committee meeting
  - Ask for updates that can be shared with the community

**6. Approval of Minutes**

Motion is made to approve the minutes of the February 7, 2024 Milton School Committee Meeting.

Second: Member Ross Denny

Vote: 6-0-0

**7. Next Meeting Agenda Items**

Updated

**8. Adjourn**

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

Second: Member Ross Denny

Vote: 6-0-0

Meeting adjourned at 8:40pm.