

Milford Board of Education Board of Education Special Meeting February 3, 2011

Board members present:

Tracy Casey
Suzanne DiBiase
Diane Kruger-Carroll
Mark Stapleton, Chair
Jay Tranquilli
Robert M. White

Board members absent:

Dave Amendola
Josip Jukic
Gregory Oliver
Jack O'Connell

Administration present:

Philip Russell
Wendy Kopazna

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Milford Board of Education held a Special Meeting on Thursday, February 3, 2011 in the Learning Center at the Parsons Complex. Chairman Stapleton called the meeting to order at 6:47 p.m.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Kathy Bonetti – 157 Seaside Avenue – Mrs. Bonetti read from a prepared statement supporting the idea of rescinding February break and having the students stay in school. She told the board that she has heard from many parents and students in favor also. The teachers and students have only been in school six out of 22 weeks full time. She also addressed how working parents scramble to find daycare when school is cancelled. She further explained the CMT/CAPT tests will be administered very soon. The children need to be in school to prepare for them.

III. THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL CANCELLATIONS:

In the absence of Mr. Cummings, Mr. Russell explained the recommended changes to the 2010-11 Academic Calendar.

He explained the board must first take action to suspend Policy EL-15 which requires that a 30-day notice be provided to the public before any calendar changes can be made. With the six cancellations due to the weather, the waiver is necessary. He also said that this would be a onetime occurrence.

Mr. Russell then explained the last day of school would be June 20, 2011, given there are no more cancellations due to inclement weather. This would be done by:

1. The elimination of one day of instruction. The current calendar calls for 181 days of instruction but the state requires only 180.
2. Move the March 28 Professional Development Day to the last day of the school year. The last three days of school will remain half-days and will consist of the last two academic days and the teacher work day.
3. Eliminate February vacation. Even with the modifications described above, this still provides us no leeway for future weather disruptions in the weeks ahead. February vacation provides us up to four more days. If there are no weather issues that week (and in the intervening weeks) we can move the last day of school for students back to Monday, June 20 and Tuesday, June 21 for teachers. This will provide us four additional possible snow days to use.

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Mr. Russell further told the board it would be prudent to note that if we were to exceed those 4 days our next step would be to take one day of April vacation away for every day of needed for school closures, up to June 24. Those days would be taken from the end of the April vacation week, moving backward toward the beginning of that week.

More importantly, eliminating February break it is a better decision for everyone. Students need to be in school now; they have already lost far too many days. Additional days will also allow more time for CMT and CAPT preparation.

Mr. Russell told the board administration will have to work on some issues caused by the elimination of February break. A meeting will be held to discuss the high school attendance policy and how work can be made up by the students who will miss school due to previously scheduled vacations.

IV. ACTION ITEMS

a. EL15 Policy

Mr. White made a motion to override Policy Governance Executive Limitation 15.2 requirement of 30 day notice of calendar change due to the given circumstances. Mrs. Casey seconded. The motion passed 6-0.

b. 2010-11 Academic Calendar Revision

Mr. White made a motion to authorize the superintendent to make the necessary changes to the 2010-11 Academic Calendar while ensuring that all State instruction requirements are met. Mrs. Casey seconded.

Mrs. Casey asked if the professional development would be different moving it from one full day in March to the end of the year.

Mrs. Krois told her the professional development will be somewhat different because it will be held at the year end. It will most likely be used for transitional needs.

Dr. Stapleton said he understands the need to eliminate the vacation. There have been many interruptions. He feels the district has no choice but to do this.

Mrs. Kruger-Carroll said Mrs. Bonetti brought up a great statement when she said six weeks out of 22 have been full weeks of instruction time. She too feels the kids need to be in school to learn.

Mrs. Casey added that she would like to see snow days built into the district calendar for the 2011-12 school year. Many districts build snow days into their calendars.

The motion passed 5-1 (Kruger-Carroll).

V. ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. White made a motion to adjourn. Mrs. Casey seconded. The motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Robert M. White
Corresponding Secretary

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Pam Griffin
Recording Secretary