

**Milford Board of Education**

Board Meeting Minutes  
February 23, 2015

**Board members present:**

Claire Casey  
Michael DeGrego  
John DeRosa  
Suzanne DiBiase  
Jennifer Federico  
Susan Glennon, Chair  
Dr. Heidi Gold-Dworkin  
Anthony Piselli  
C. Robert Satti, Jr.  
Earl Whiskeyman

**Administration present:**

Dr. Elizabeth Feser  
Michael Cummings (arrived 8:05 p.m.)  
Jim Richetelli  
Susan Kelleher

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Glennon called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. in the City Hall Auditorium. She then asked that everyone join in the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

**II. Board Workshop on Elementary Redistricting**

Ms. Glennon delivered a PowerPoint that gave the history of the redistricting work from the beginning when the Board appointed a long range planning committee in 2013. The committee developed criteria and made its recommendations to the Board in March 2014. The Board then committed to its plan in October 2014 with the adoption of the following:

- Return to K-5 configuration
  - K-5 was desired by families
  - Same start times for siblings
- Keep all 8 elementary schools open
  - Would allow room to grow and expand programs
  - Would allow all schools to have similar space for programming
- Explore enhanced programming for all students
  - The Board's desire is that all students would have access to enhanced programming and charged administration to begin exploring options K-12.
- Redistrict elementary (citywide) to balance enrollment
  - Allow equity in resources from school to school. The shift would go from west to east.
  - Currently have 7 program rooms in each elementary school
- Decentralize Pre-K into 3 or more schools
  - Pre-K in at least 3 schools with discussion centered on geographic balance

By November 2014, the Board developed its redistricting criteria:

- Adhere to natural boundaries; keep neighborhoods together
- Balance enrollments across schools

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- Minimize student travel time
- Mitigate impact on students already redistricted and keeping those families in mind
- Avoid unequal distribution of redistricting burden

Ms. Glennon reviewed the seven program rooms that are currently in the elementary schools. They are: Art, music, 2 resources rooms, 2 computer labs and a general room shared by Band, Strings, enrichment, etc.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Ms. Glennon asked Dr. Feser if she had anything to add.

Dr. Feser offered comments which supported the criteria adopted by the Board. She told the Board she hopes the Pre-K program can become accredited by NEASC which will not be possible without decentralization. She noted something as simple as the distance between the classroom and the nearest bathroom could stand in the way of accreditation. She then emphasized the need for the dedicated program rooms and said Administration would want more programs in the elementary schools if they could have them.

A Board discussion ensued around the programs. Dr. Feser confirmed the schools currently have seven program rooms in each school.

Ms. Glennon then turned the meeting over to Mr. Zuba and Ms. Augur.

Mr. Zuba and Ms. Augur delivered a presentation that responded to questions forwarded to the team on redistricting. The items covered were clarification of school capacities and operating efficiency, how the options were developed, specific neighborhood concerns and grandfathering.

Mr. Zuba guided the Board through the development of the options. He showed how the operating capacity vs enrollment resulted in a deficit of seats in the Pumpkin Delight/JFK pair and the Meadowside/Mathewson pair and how the pairs would be short classrooms if the district went back to K-5 within the current boundaries. Schools on the west side of town would be overcrowded, showing the need for redistricting from west to east.

Ms. Augur walked the Board through the evolution of the options to balance the schools.

Mr. Zuba addressed questions raised about Milford Point Road, North Milford students, Beaver Brook, Caswell Cove, Gunn Street, Lamp Light and Minute Man Drive. He used maps and narrative that clarified the rationale.

Grandfathering was of concern to many. Ms. Augur shared the only way to make grandfathering work for all 4<sup>th</sup> grade students would be to maintain all K classes in their 4 current schools, requiring an additional transition for those students at first grade. She discussed several other cons to this option.

She explained that the grandfathering of a fifth grader who is redistricted out of their current pair could work. However, district 1 fifth graders would have to attend JFK, and the 2 PreK classes would have to be

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delayed by one year. District 2 fifth graders would attend Meadowside. There were no space concerns in district 3 and no changes to district 4.

Mr. Richetelli reported three additional bus runs would be necessary. Administration feels that families should not be burdened with transportation costs. Transportation could be provided for those students for one year only. Administration is prepared to find the costs associated with it.

Mr. DeRosa asked where the two PreK classes would be if they would not be in JFK for the 2016-17 school year. Dr. Feser believes it would be Orange Avenue. However, that has not been finalized.

Ms. Glennon made the observation that some criteria may be delayed by one year to accommodate grandfathering the current fourth graders, for example, decentralizing PreK, but it was not a permanent change. Mr. DeRosa agreed.

Ms. Glennon then asked the Board to take a few minutes to digest the information.

Following a brief break, Mr. Piselli asked Mr. Zuba how the grandfathered numbers were derived. He was told that they used the full number of affected students.

Ms. Glennon reminded the Board she is hopeful there is a plan that will serve the district holistically and have everything done at one time.

Mr. DeRosa asked if the administration has the number of students who will pass their home school to go to the new school. They do not.

The Board then discussed the amount of moves children have incurred since entering elementary school. Mr. DeRosa requested the number of students who will move four times with the change.

Ms. Glennon noted there are three programs offered to Milford students for aftercare. She then requested an analysis of costs and what can be done for the redistricted families that would incur higher costs.

Dr. Gold-Dworkin requested the lists of schools and the before and aftercare programs.

Ms. Glennon suggested a meeting in the future looking at the before and after school programs. However, the need to remedy the situation for those affected by the redistricting is for discussion at this time.

Following the discussion, Mr. DeGrego challenged Milone and MacBroom to find a better option for the 110 Mathewson students who are slated to go to Orange Avenue. Ms. Augur reiterated that was explained in the presentation.

Ms. Glennon moved to Public Comment. She asked Mrs. Bonetti to be the time keeper.

### **III. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Cathy Berni- 96 Centennial Drive – Mrs. Berni told the Board her daughter would have been a product of four moves if she stayed in Milford Public Schools. She also referred to the long term plan as being nothing

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new. It has been the conversation in the city for 10 years. She has concerns of the building operating efficiency. There would be no room for growth. She also cautioned the Board relative to the building on Bic Drive.

Sherri Franzman – 46 Somerset Lane – Mrs. Franzman thanked Ms. Glennon for meeting with her. She further said she is confident the education at Orange Avenue is comparable to Mathewson. However, she wants the Board to find an option to keep the 166 students in their home schools. She also asked the Board to look at the boundaries for high school.

Carol Murati – 165 Centennial Drive – Ms. Murati asked the Board to send Milone and MacBroom back to the drawing board. Her child will attend Orange Avenue instead of Mathewson. Her bus will drive by Mathewson to get to her new school. She also reminded the Board PreK is an option not a priority.

Kiersten Naumann - 66 Centennial Drive – She expressed her concerns of the affect the redistricting will have on her family. She has two children in the school system. It will be her family's fourth school in six years. She charged the Board with addressing the middle and high school boundaries.

Cheri Agresti – 44 Gunn Street – Ms. Agresti has heard the conversation about the movements. She feels that you could put the sliver of students back into JFK and then make room at Meadowside for those students.

Christopher Libiase – 105 Noyes Road – Mr. Libiase implored the Board to make a good decision. The students need stability.

Sandy Boehm – 148 Centennial Drive – She asked the Board to have Milone and MacBroom recommend different options. Redistricting should be “process improvement.” North Milford is being affected again. Her son has told her if he has to go to Orange Avenue, he would like to be home schooled. She also reminded the Board that PreK is optional.

Joanne Poffenberger – 50 Green Street – Ms. Poffenberger has four children in the school system. She told the Board her son is one of a small group of children who go to Meadowside for elementary and eventually attend Foran. She spoke about the pros and cons of the movement, and keeping old friends while making new ones.

Jacqueline Smith – 205 Centennial Drive – Ms. Smith has a son and daughter. If the proposed plan is approved, her children will lose all of her friends. It should be all about the kids.

Ms. Glennon asked the Board if there would be agreement to discuss the high school and middle school boundaries at a later date, after the elementary redistricting is decided. All agreed.

Ms. Glennon then responded to the comment made about the development on Bic Drive. The units will be studio and one bedroom apartments only.

Mr. DeRosa requested the consultants to further look at the school slated for PreK. It would behoove the Board not to disrupt North Milford families.

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Mr. Whiskeyman stated he thought the intent is for PreK to be offered in all schools eventually.

Mr. DeRosa suggested putting PreK in a building where you would not be moving 110 students out on the north side of town.

Mrs. Federico requested that the PreK and special education programs be put in the west side of town. She further said that Mr. DeRosa is addressing a short term issue. This has been done for too long. There needs to be long term plan.

Being no further discussion, Ms. Glennon asked for a motion to adjourn.

### IV. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Satti made a motion to adjourn. Mr. DeRosa seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

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Mrs. Pam Griffin  
Recording Secretary

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Mr. Robert Satti  
Corresponding Secretary