

Milford Board of Education

Meeting Minutes
March 11, 2013

Board members present:

Tracy Casey
Suzanne DiBiase
Laura Fetter
George Gensure
Susan Glennon
Dora Kubek
Beverley Pierson
Christopher Saley
Earl Whiskeyman

Administration present:

Dr. Elizabeth Feser
Michael Cummings
James Richetelli
Susan Kelleher

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Milford Board of Education held a board meeting on Monday, March 11, 2013 in the Board Room in the Parsons Complex. Mrs. Casey called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. with the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. STUDENT AND STAFF RECOGNITION

There were two recognitions of the evening.

Foran Wrestling/Indoor Track

The Foran Wrestling team won the SCC Division II title. Clay Callahan and C.J. Luth are the senior co-captains of the wrestling team. They helped set the school record by winning 23 matches during the regular season. Six Foran wrestlers out of 14 qualified for the State Open. Clay finished 2nd at the State completion moving him onto the New England tournament, where he placed 2nd. C.J. Luth placed 4th at the New England tournament. Dr. Feser congratulated them.

Foran Indoor Track participant, Nik Griswold earned the title of the Class M State Champion for his outstanding performance in the Track and Field High Jump event. Dr.. Feser then congratulated Nik.

Spelling Bee Winners

The next recognition was given to the winners of the City's Spelling Bee. The Spelling Bee is an annual event hosted by the Junior Woman's Club. This year, Milford students swept the Bee. Those recognized were:

Kruttika Gopal, Harborside	1 st Place
Sumanth Kondapalli, Harborside	2 nd Place
Hasher Mirza, West Shore	3 rd Place

Dr. Feser also thanked Susan Glennon for her participation as a judge.

III. STUDENT REPORTS

Ratan Manohar & Hayley Soulier reported on the latest activity and upcoming events occurring at Jonathan Law High School. Hamsa Ganapathi and Alexandra Corsi presented the report for Joseph A. Foran High School. Both reports are on file.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Trish Simoncek – 61 Governors Way – Mrs. Simoncek would like the board to reconsider the start date for school. It would be better served if school would begin after Labor Day.

IV. CHAIR'S REPORT

Mrs. Casey reported the Board of Finance approved the education budget as submitted. She then asked for the liaison reports.

Ms. Glennon told the board members PTACouncil is moving forward with the Career Expo. The expo will offer students the opportunity to speak with people who are subject matter experts in their career. It gets kids thinking early on. The expo will be held at Parsons Gym from 7:00-8:30 p.m. on April 1st. All students are welcome to attend.

Mrs. Casey asked for a motion to replace Dr. Stapleton.

Ms. Glennon made a motion to replace Dr. Stapleton, Republican First District with Mr. Michael DeGrego, also Republican First District. Ms. DiBiase seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Casey said she would send a letter to the City Clerk. Once the letter is received, Mr. DeGrego will then be sworn in by the City Clerk.

Mrs. Casey then explained that two board policies (GP11 and GP22) have been updated for clarity. They have been reviewed by Attorney Dugas. Over the years, there has been some confusion about the need to have a quorum to hear a grievance. She also told the board the Grievance Hearing policy modified language to read the board will comply with the Committee of the Whole policy. She told the board members the policies would be brought forward as a second read and approval at the next business meeting.

V. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Policies

Mr. Cummings told the board the three policies (5111, 5113 & 5113.2) are being presented for approval. Based on recommendations from the board, some changes have been made to the "Age of Entrance" policy. He then asked the board if there were any questions.

Approved

Ms. Glennon questioned P-5111; the principal's decision is final based on placement. She would like to see something similar to the Chain of Command Policy, i.e. teacher, principal then superintendent. She feels consistency is important.

Mr. Cummings told her that administration does not always follow the policy all the way up because the principals are best able to determine at that level for such things as discipline and age of entrance.

Ms. Glennon asked if parents would have "no recourse" if they did not agree with the decision. Mr. Cummings told her that they would not.

Mrs. Casey has discomfort that parents do have the option to appeal at a higher level. She understands a team reviews the placement of a child but she does not feel that a principal should have the authority without the decision to appeal.

Mr. Saley said that he sees everyone view.

Mrs. Casey told the administration the language in the policy is clear. It tells a parent that they do cannot appeal. The principal has the authority. She is not comfortable with the language. The parent should be able to appeal to the superintendent.

Mrs. Casey asked for a motion.

Ms. Glennon made a motion to approve policy 5111 "Age of Entrance" as presented. Ms. DiBiase seconded. By a roll call vote, the motion passed 6-3 (No-Casey/Fetter/Glennon).

Ms. Glennon made a motion to approve policy 5113 "Attendance" as presented. Ms. DiBiase seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Glennon made a motion to approve policy 5113.2 "Truancy" as presented. Ms. DiBiase seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Prep for Common Core and Smarter Balanced Assessments

Dr. Feser began by explaining the district will be piloting some assessments in the spring. She then turned the meeting over to Mr. Cummings.

Mr. Cummings told the board the State will be phasing in an assessment that mirrors the SBAC assessments. It is a 45 minute test in grades 3 through 8 and grade 11. Each school sets up the time to administer the test, and all are computer driven.

He then distributed sample tests. He showed the board how the tests will differ. CMT is very distinctive. However, SBAC will give some of the same questions in different ways. The test questions will build on one another. The theory is SBAC will make the students think and eliminate the ability to guess.

Mr. Cummings told the board the assessment is based on the common core.

2013-14 Academic Calendar

Dr. Feser told the board this year has not been easy relative to the calendar. The district has had to eliminate the February and April vacations. She then explained at the last meeting, the board asked that a survey be administered to the parents and staff. The survey had a total of six questions. She then provided an overview of the survey by using a PowerPoint presentation. The intent was to capture five days and to end the school year in early June.

Question 1 – Do you support going back to school on the Monday before Labor Day? 53% of parents said yes. 56% of staff said no.

Question 2 – Do you support schools being open on Rosh Hashanah?

Mrs. Casey asked if equal weight was given. Dr. Feser told her that the teachers would be beginning 1 ½ weeks before Labor Day.

70% of parents said yes. 68% of the staff said yes.

Question 3 – Should we be open on Columbus Day? 66% of parents said yes. 50% of teachers said yes. (2nd day toward the goal)

Question 4 – Should we be open on Veterans Day? 61% of parents said yes. 52% of staff said yes.

Question 5 – Relative to February vacation, should we take off only one day? If so, would you rather come in Friday before or the Tuesday after? The consensus was to take the day before the holiday weekend.

Question 6 – Should we add days to the end of the year? The decision was made not to go beyond the 20th of June. The tentative last day is June 5th.

Ms. Glennon asked if December 20th would be a ½ day. She was told yes.

Dr. Feser told the board she researched the idea of being in session on Election Day. However, she did not get far. Some schools are needed to be used as polling places. She also told the board that the State law dictates that school districts cannot modify State holidays in January and December. Therefore, school cannot be in session on Christmas, New Year's Day and Martin Luther King Day.

In researching March vacations, only four districts have elected to take a March vacation. Most districts have chosen to take the same week in April. This is better for staff that live in other towns.

Dr. Feser further explained the research that went into the development of the calendar.

Mrs. Casey told the administration Milford has a hard time with change.

Dr. Feser told her that the state is trying to develop a common calendar. She then reviewed the calendars before the board.

Mrs. Fetter asked if the calendar would affect the camps and the budget. If we gained a week back the camps would begin sooner.

Mr. Whiskeyman noted that the survey only gave k-5/6-8 and 9-12 options. He suggested that the k-5 be broken out by k-2/3-5. He also told the administration they should begin to track the temperatures on the end days and beginning days for planning purposes.

Mr. Gensure said that the information did not have the grade levels broken out. He did not know if that would have made a difference.

Approved

Mr. Saley told the administration he would love to see school start after Labor Day. School is projected to end in early June. Therefore it would not matter to have school start a couple days later. Also, he would like to see the winter holiday break to be extended to include 1-2 & 1-3. He supports full weeks of school.

Mrs. Casey said the survey showed the parents would like to begin earlier.

Dr. Feser told the board Ohio has a two week break over the Christmas holiday. However, they begin school in mid-August.

Dr. Feser concluded by stating the calendar presented allows less disruption to students. She thanked the board for the suggestion to conduct a survey.

Mr. Saley would like administration to push for being in school on Election Day.

Food Service Financial Report

Mrs. Faustich reviewed the financial report for food service. She told the board kids are being encouraged to eat more grains and eat colorful foods. However, some changes are being introduced. She reported, with the new legislation, costs have increased. Through January 31, 2013, there is a negative balance of \$31,750. However, the state reimbursement of \$.06 a meal should make up for it. The department plans to break even for the year.

Mr. Whiskeyman asked if the reimbursement comes from the state. He was told \$.06 comes from the Federal government and the \$.10 per meal reimbursement is State money.

Healthy Foods Certification

Mrs. Faustich explained the Healthy Food Certification is an annual program. The board chose to participate in the 2012-13 school year. It affects fundraising, vending machines and meals that are sold within the district. However, you can chose to be exempt from participation at events such as plays, football games etc.

Mrs. Casey asked if administration has received feedback regarding the fundraisers. She was told no.

Ms. Glennon made for a motion to participate in the Healthy Food Certification and certify that all food items offered for sale to students in the school(s) under the our jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will meet said standards during the period July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014. Such certification shall include all food offered for sale to student separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to, school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, and any fundraising activities on school premises whether or not school sponsored. Ms. DiBiase seconded the motion.

Mr. Gensure asked if there were any changes that would affect the program. Mrs. Faustich told him there were none. However, the state needs to post any changes in January.

The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Glennon made a motion to exclude from certification food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards, provided that (1) such food is sold in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend, (2) such sale is at the location of the event, and (3) such food is not sold from a vending machine or school store. Ms. DiBiase seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Human Resources Report

Mrs. Kopazna gave the Human Resources Report for the month of February. She told the board, in addition to the openings, anticipated openings have been posted.

Ms. Glennon asked Mrs. Kopazna to review the Team Mentor stipends. She was told they replace the former Best Program positions. The new teachers are teamed up with a seasoned teacher.

Ms. Glennon then asked what the Program Facilitator does for the Adult Education program. Mr. Cummings told her the position is tied to the mandated state adult education program. It is usually funded through the grant program and is a requirement of the program.

Mrs. Casey asked if the district anticipates someone leaving a strings position. She was told yes.

Mrs. Casey asked how the hiring of a principal at Foran was going. Mrs. Kopazna told her the deadline was extended due to inclement weather. However, the interviews should begin in the next couple of weeks.

Mrs. Casey asked to move the minutes on February 25, 2013 to New Business. Ms. DiBiase seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Ms. Glennon made a motion to approve Consent Agenda items 1, 2a & 3

1. Disbursement Report
2. Consideration of Minutes
 - a. February 20, 2013
3. Acceptance of the Jonathan Law High School Roof Replacement Project (State Project 084-0183 RR)

Ms. DiBiase seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Mrs. Casey made the following change to the minutes of February 25, 2013:

Under Adjournment. change Mr. Maroney to Ms. Glennon.

Ms. Glennon made a motion to approve the minutes with the changes made. Ms. DiBiase seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Approved

Dr. Feser explained that the board has been approving overnight field trips since 9/11. She then apologized to the board that this process has continued. She then told the board she reviewed the policy as a whole. The policy does not give the board the authority. However, after the events of 9/11 it was felt to be a good practice.

Dr. Feser told the board Mr. Cummings will be managing the field trip policy and the sign off. In fact, changes will be forthcoming to reflect trips abroad. The policy will be presented to the board at a later time.

Mrs. Casey thanked the administration for the update.

IX. BOARD COMMENT

Ms. Kubek asked if the board would be getting an update on the Special Audit. Dr. Feser told her the board would be updated in the coming months.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Glennon made a motion to adjourn. Ms. DiBiase seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Pam Griffin
Recording Secretary

Ms. Susan Glennon
Corresponding Secretary