

**Milford Board of Education**

Meeting Minutes  
April 9, 2012

**Board members present:**

Tracy Casey  
Suzanne DiBiase  
George Gensure  
Susan Glennon  
James Maroney  
Beverley Pierson  
Christopher Saley  
Mark Stapleton  
Earl Whiskeyman

**Administration present:**

Dr. Elizabeth Feser  
Michael Cummings  
Wendy Kopazna  
James Richetelli

**Board members absent:**

Dora Kubek

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The Milford Board of Education held a business meeting on Monday April 9, 2012 in the Board Room in the Parsons Complex. Mrs. Casey called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. with the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance immediately following.

**II. STUDENT AND STAFF RECOGNITION**

Dr. Feser recognized the winners of the Junior Woman's Club of Milford's Citywide Spelling Bee. Over 18 contestants competed on March 2<sup>nd</sup>. Of the 18, the students placing 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> will advance to the State Spelling Bee to be held in May. Dr. Feser awarded the following with certificates:

Patrick Semana – 5<sup>th</sup> grader at Calf Pen Meadow (3<sup>rd</sup> Place)

Matthew Cruz – 6<sup>th</sup> grader at East Shore (2<sup>nd</sup> Place)

Geroan DeGuzman – 6<sup>th</sup> grader at Harborside (1<sup>st</sup> Place)

The next recognition was given the Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) club. DECA helps students develop skills and competence for marketing careers, build self-esteem, experience leadership and practice community service. The club recently took 8<sup>th</sup> place in a marketing testing. They also placed 1<sup>st</sup> in a Teamwork workshop that was held at the Aqua Turf in December. Dr. Feser congratulated the team and the advisor, Louise Brown. Recognized were:

Jenny Taing – 12<sup>th</sup> grader at Foran (1<sup>st</sup> Place: Professional Sales Event)

Mac Young – 12<sup>th</sup> grader at Foran (4<sup>th</sup> Place: Professional Sales Event)

Maggie Folsom – 10<sup>th</sup> grader at Foran (3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Sports and Entertainment Team Decision Making)

John Frank – 10<sup>th</sup> grader at Foran (3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Sports and Entertainment Team Decision Making)

Claire Marler – 12<sup>th</sup> grader at Foran (4<sup>th</sup> Place: Sports and Entertainment Promotion Plan)

Megan McCaskill – 12<sup>th</sup> grader at Foran (4<sup>th</sup> Place: Sports and Entertainment Promotion Plan)

The final recognition of the evening was given to a group of students from Foran. Being selected to the Connecticut Music Educators Association All-State Music Festival is not an easy task. The students began auditioning in November. Three students were chosen to participate in the festival. The students selected were:

Douglas Buckheit, All-State Concert Band on Bassoon  
Steven Bagoly, All State Chorus  
Mallory Marin, All State Chorus  
Jessica Shearer, Director of Bands and Music Electives/Foran  
Theresa Voss, Choir Director/Foran

Dr. Feser congratulated them for the dedication and hard work.

### **III. STUDENT REPORTS**

Tess Gildea and Thomas Bassine reported on the latest activity and upcoming events occurring at Joseph A. Foran High School. Gabrielle Novak and Matthew Ouellette presented the report for Jonathan Law High School. Both reports are on file.

### **IV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Joe Meade – 45 Carriage Lane – Mr. Meade spoke on behalf of the Literacy Center in Milford. He wanted the board and the public know about the work done at the center. The Center is a non-profit organization that helps people learn the English language and provides literacy opportunities in Milford. He told the board there is a great play that will begin on April 28<sup>th</sup>. The play is titled “The Boy Who Fell Into A Book” and will be performed at the Fine Arts Center. He encouraged people to attend a show.

Pastor Loomer – Pastor Loomer questioned the appropriateness of the Glsen “Day of Silence”. He has already sent the board an email stating the reasons of his concerns. Further, the day is sponsored by the group “Glsen”. There is a negative message sent by the organization. He told the board if parents only knew, they would be enraged.

Lucilla Massey – Ms. Massey thanked Mr. Richetelli for giving a wonderful presentation on East Shore. She also commented on the new food rules that will go into effect next year. She is saddened that children will have to take food that they may not eat. Maybe the schools could start a bin and donate to the homeless.

Cathy Berni – 96 Centennial Drive – Ms. Berni commented on the DCIP. Page 3, second sentence does not make sense. She would like to hear more about the parent community feedback and math. She also noted that there are a lot of acronyms in the document.

### **V. CHAIR’S REPORT**

Chair Casey then explained that in the middle of March, the board received a letter from Pastor Loomer. She told the public that the board has been assured that there has not been any unapproved literature distributed in the schools. According to legal counsel, the law does not prevent a student from participating in a student initiated activity. The principles of Equal Protection and Freedom of Speech, as well as other state and federal laws, prohibits the board from discriminating against students who chose to engage in this

activity. For example, Connecticut law prohibits discrimination based upon “sexual orientation.” *See*, Section 46a-81a, Connecticut General Statutes. In addition, the Equal Access Act prohibits a school district that allows non-curriculum clubs to exist from discriminating against student run gay-lesbian clubs. This Federal law was lobbied for and backed by religious groups to allow bible study and similar groups in schools. It applies equally to student groups attempting to bring attention to the bullying of gay and lesbian students.

Beyond the law, however, the board’s commitment is to teach children acceptance of and respect for those who may look or act differently than them, and to let children know that school is a safe place where they can express themselves without fear of discrimination and ridicule.

Chair Casey then told the board that she and Mr. Saley will serve as the board liaisons for the upcoming MASA negotiations.

Chair Casey concluded her report by thanking the board for attending the retreat. She felt the board has accomplished a lot. Two board members will be assigned to the long range committee; Susan Glennon and Mark Stapleton.

## **VI. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

Dr. Feser shared a PowerPoint (attached) which gave her reflections of being the superintendent over the past year. She told the board the administration spent time even before she was hired developing a very powerful document titled Theory of Action. The document is a compilation of action steps which focus on the primary importance of instructional needs of students. She defined the indicators needed to be a high performing district. All of which are embedded in the Theory of Action. She then highlighted the schools strengths, weaknesses and priorities going forward.

Chair Casey thanked Dr. Feser for her presentation. She told the public that Milford is off to a great start!

### **District Continuous Improvement Plan**

Mr. Cummings explained the District Continuous Improvement Plan (DCIP) is a document that explains how the Board’s three year goals will be achieved. Benchmarks have been established for each of the academic goals. He then turned the meeting over to Mr. Hammer to deliver a PowerPoint presentation.

Mr. Hammer began his presentation by showing the board that you cannot feasibly use one year’s worth of data as the basis for determining the baseline. Scores fluctuate from year to year. Therefore, it would prove to better to use a three year average. This sparked comments from the board.

Chair Casey told administration that the board voted on its goals last year. While she understands what administration is presenting, the language in the document that was approved in September 2011 is very specific. The document states:

Increasing the number of students achieving Goal on the CMT and CAPT in all grades and subtests by a minimum of 20% using the 2011 scores as a baseline.

Mr. Cummings told her the language could be interpreted different ways.

A board discussion ensued.

Mr. Saley said looking at the averages; the percent would be higher using three year averages.

Mr. Whiskeyman said the scores can dramatically vary from year to year. The results will fluctuate. It is only if you look at the scores over time you will get “true” data.

Chair Casey told the administration that the goal was to use 2011 scores as the baseline, but agreed they have been finalized.

Dr. Stapleton understands why the administration wants to change the baseline.

Chair Casey asked the board if anyone was interested in re-establishing the baseline for the goals. All but Mr. Saley said no.

Dr. Feser apologized for the confusion. Administration had interpreted milestone as a number. She told the board there was no intent to lower the standards. The administration will provide an update at the next Board of Education meeting.

The board recessed at 9:30 p.m.

Chair Casey called the meeting back in order at 9:35 p.m.

### **High School Graduation 2012**

Mr. Cummings told the board the building principals have reviewed the different scenarios for when to hold graduations. The recommendation is to hold it on the same day at the same time for each high school.

A board discussion regarding the dates and times ensued.

Chair Casey asked for a motion.

Mr. Maroney made a motion to have the high school graduations on June 19, 2012 at the same time. Dr. Stapleton seconded the motion.

Mr. Saley asked to amend the motion to having the high school graduations on the same date but at different times. Mr. Maroney seconded the motion.

After a roll call vote 5-4 (DiBiase, Glennon, Stapleton, Whiskeyman), the motion passed.

Chair Casey authorized administration to determine the times. Mrs. Casey also told the administration that they could bring the graduation date and time back to the board for discussion if needed.

### **Quarterly Budget Report**

Mr. Richetelli shared the budget report with the board. He noted that accounts 5102, 5103 and 5601 are eligible for state reimbursement. He told the board he will report back to the board in June with raw numbers. However, he does project there will be a savings to the district.

Mr. Maroney asked him if there are forecasted projects that the administration could go forward with.

Mr. Saley asked if the savings could be used for East Shore.

Mr. Richetelli told the board that administration would present recommendations to the board at a later time.

### **Budget Transfer**

Mr. Richetelli explained that due to retirements there will be a savings in account 1111. The teachers who retire are in fact paid at the higher end of the pay scale, rather than a teacher filling the vacated position.

Mr. Cummings then told one of the board goals is to strengthen administration. To achieve this, the district needs to provide professional development to the staff. He then reviewed the proposed listing of professional development. Some were programs that the district has been purchasing over time and some were specific workshops. The amount for PD surpasses its balance of 22,557 by \$143,000. Therefore the administration requests a transfer be done.

Mr. Maroney made a motion to approve the transfer of \$143,000 from Account 1111 (Certified Teacher Salaries) to Account 8111 (Professional Development). Dr. Stapleton seconded. The motion passed.

### **Human Resources Report**

Mrs. Kopazna shared the personnel report with the board.

Mr. Maroney asked how the search is going for administrators. Mrs. Kopazna told him the job posting has closed. Administration is in the process of interviewing potential candidates.

Mrs. Casey asked about the behaviorist opening. This has been an opening for a while. She asked Mrs. Kopazna to give the board an update in the future.

## **VII. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS**

Mr. Maroney made a motion to approve the consent agenda items 1-3.

1. Consideration of Minutes
  - a. March 12, 2012 Business Meeting
  - b. March 19, 2012 Board Workshop
  - c. March 26, 2012 Committee of the Whole Meeting
2. Disbursement Report

Dr. Stapleton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

**IX. NEW BUSINESS**

None.

**X. BOARD COMMENT:**

Chairperson Casey congratulated Mr. Cummings on the birth of his new daughter, Grace Barbara. She then presented him with a gift on behalf of the board.

Chair Casey announced that Ms. Kubek was on vacation. She then reminded the board that board policy states that the proper channels of communication should be adhered to referring to parent matters.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT:**

Mr. Maroney made a motion to adjourn. Dr. Stapleton seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 10:25 p.m.

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James Maroney  
Corresponding Secretary

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Pam Griffin  
Recording Secretary