

MILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
Regular Business Meeting
August 18, 2008

The Milford Board of Education held a meeting on Monday, August 18, 2008 in the Board of Education Meeting Room of the Parsons Complex. Board Chairman, David Hourigan called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. asking everyone to join him in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Board Members Present

Mr. D. Amendola
Mrs. T. Casey
Chairman D. Hourigan
Mrs. C. Kopazna
Mr. J. Quish
Mrs. J. Rohrig
Mr. J. Santa Barbara
Mrs. P. Staneski
Mrs. G. Stanford
Mr. D. Steinlauf

Chairman Hourigan began the meeting by asking for a motion to approve the minutes.

Mrs. Stanford and Mrs. Rohrig made and seconded a motion to approve the minutes of July 14, 2008 Business Board Meeting. The motion passed.

Chairman Hourigan then read the public comment statement.

Public Comment

Cathy Berni – 99 Centennial Drive – Mrs. Berni asked that the breathalyzer policy have consistent language. For example, who owns it? Is it the Board of Ed or the Milford Public Schools? She then referred to a typo “BAG” which should be “BAC”, which stands for Blood Alcohol Content. She also asked for clarification on #7. Retest.

Mike Taylor – 340 Wolf Harbor Road – Mr. Taylor said that he was initially reluctant to the new policy. However, after speaking to his school aged children, he is fine with it. He then expressed his discontent with the selection of the Secret Life of Bees for the summer reading requirement. He believes the requirement should be gender neutral.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Hourigan did not give a report.

Mrs. Stanford told the board she had received a thank you note from Mr. Toronto's family. Mr. Toronto was a former board member who recently passed away.

Chairman Hourigan asked to reorder the agenda moving the breathalyzer discussion to IV.2 on the agenda.

Mrs. Stanford and Mrs. Rohrig made and seconded a motion to move breathalyzer policy from section VII to section IV.2. Motion passed.

Dr. Polansky said administration strongly recommends board approval of the breathalyzer policy. It is an add on to the alcohol/drug and tobacco policy.

He then turned the meeting over to Mr. Cummings.

Mr. Cummings said the policy will be used for two reasons; dances and school use to document impairment. He told the board the passive test would be used. Students would talk into the device. He then said that he had been in contact with the chief of police and was told the district could use retired officers to administer the test. He further noted, active police officers would not be used.

Mr. Cummings then said that being under the influence was not a crime, or against the law. He mentioned many other towns have instituted a similar policy.

Mrs. Staneski asked for clarification of "the law".

Dr. Polansky told her that if you are under age purchasing alcohol or acting disorderly, then you are breaking the law. However, being under the influence is not.

Mr. Quish asked why the test is being administered only at dances and was told blanket testing, or testing across the board would send the wrong message.

The board requested that revisions be made linking the 5161.6 (Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco) policy to the new policy, consistency with language and infraction fees. The board then discussed the pros and cons of testing at sporting events or testing students who are not Milford students.

Mrs. Staneski questioned the wording in the regulation section of the policy referring to number 5. What would happen if the parent could not be contacted?

Mrs. Staneski also asked administration to research Madison's school district, which has offered a safe ride program to students.

The board suggested making the requested revisions and place it on the September agenda for approval.

Dr. Polansky told the board notification would go out via a letter to parents and would be posted on the website.

Dr. Polansky then told the board the new teacher orientation began today. The orientation will take place over the entire week. The district has hired 43 terrific teachers.

He then told the board the school tour is Wednesday, August 20th. He alerted the board of his concerns with the Foran gym floor project completion. He thanked Mr. Bradbury for constant dedication to the construction and maintenance of the schools.

He noted the school opening convocation is August 28th at Foran.

Graduation Report

Mr. Cummings then presented the graduation report.

Mr. Steinlauf asked what the circumstances are for those who must return. He was told it is most likely because they failed several courses.

Mr. Hourigan asked if the children at risk of graduation had received GED information and was told yes.

Mrs. Staneski asked if all summer school participants had graduated. Mr. Cummings is to provide her with that information.

2008 CMT Results

Mr. Cummings told the board the CMT results would be discussed in a presentation form at a future Committee of the Whole meeting. However, he wanted to share the initial test results with the board. Overall, we are still not where we want to be. He explained it is partly due to the lack of consistency. He said administration will need to look at a far more embedded instructional plan.

Mr. Cummings explained the science curriculum had been changed over the summer to align with the state's new framework for grades 3-5.

Mrs. Staneski asked where was the mis-alignment identified. Mr. Cummings told her he feels it is with the para-professional alignment. Para-professionals should only be working with students.

2008 CAPT Results

Mr. Cummings reviewed the 2008 CAPT test results with the board. He then said that the CAPT is a challenging test. He further stated the best predictor of CAPT achievement is the eighth grade reading ability level.

Bullying

Mr. Cummings shared the changes to the bullying procedure with the board. The changes were made to be in compliance with state requirements.

Mr. Hourigan asked if the wording changes came from the state and was told yes.

Mrs. Staneski asked if the bullying boxes at the schools were being used. Mr. Cummings told her he would do a survey and report back to the board.

Mr. Santa Barbara asked if the social workers and guidance counselors were still conducting classes with students. Mrs. Kelleher told him yes.

Enrollment

Mr. Cummings told the board he is continuing to monitor certain class sizes. He said the information is preliminary and will most likely change. He also said he just learned today that St. Ann's school has elected to combine grade using multi-age program for cost reasons. This may or may not increase enrollment.

Mrs. Stanford commended Mr. Cummings and Dr. Polansky for their efforts relative to classroom sizes.

Mrs. Casey asked if the five para-professionals that were eliminated from the budget had been placed. Mrs. Kopazna told her that two had resigned and the others are in the process of being placed.

Personnel Report

Mrs. Kopazna reviewed the list of job openings and personnel changes with the board. She then told the board there are only three openings at this time; one gifted and talented and two social studies teachers. The district has hired 44 new teachers; eight elementary, six middle school, 16 high school, one physical education, one art teacher and 16 for pupil personnel.

Mr. Santa Barbara asked what the split was and he was told that of the 47 openings 18 were from retirements and 27 were from resignations.

Mrs. Griffin distributed a list of new hires to the board.

Budget Report

Mr. Russell reviewed the budget report with the board. He reported that 51M has been encumbered to date. He then told the board with the fuel oil increasing the school system will use conversion burners.

Mr. Santa Barbara asked if the district was looking into solar energy usage for any school other than Foran. Mr. Russell explained that Foran would be the pilot school. Other schools could be explored after the initial study is complete.

Chairman Hourigan requested the itemized bill for the repairs made to the former Alternative Education building located on Quirk Road.

Construction Update

Mr. Bradbury showed a slide show presentation that contained before and after pictures of the significant projects worked on over the summer. He told the board there were concerns with the completion of the gym floor at Foran. He is currently awaiting the certificate of occupancy. He will have more information on Monday. The science classrooms at Law are still a concern. He continues to work with the contractors but many set backs have occurred. He will update the board next week.

The board commended Mr. Bradbury for the multitude of projects handled and completed over the summer.

East Shore Update

Mr. Russell reported to the board the East Shore modular project will be delayed. He further stated that it is necessary to submit the project to the state for review. The state building review committee will meet on October 21st to review the information. The state then has one month for review. Therefore, the bidding process will not be able to begin until late November or December.

Enumeration Update

Mr. Russell gave a PowerPoint presentation which summarized and concluded the enumeration report. In summary, the district's numbers remain flat. The numbers should not change significantly over the next five years. In some cases they will decrease.

Mr. Russell did explain that 90% of the city's households responded to the study. He stated that 70% of the return were families with children in the school system. He said the percentage is a reasonable response rate. However, the report does show that more households in the Simon Lake area did not respond.

Mr. Russell further said that growth over the next five years does not warrant a redistricting.

Mrs. Staneski said that it seems the process was a waste of time. She had hoped for more definitive data.

Mr. Steinlauf asked about the overcrowding issue relative to East Shore.

Mr. Russell explained that data shows that the enrollment at that school will decrease over the next five years.

Dr. Polansky stated there is no data that proves the need to redistrict. Administration conducted an enumeration, has reviewed NESDC data and met with the city planner.

Mrs. Rohrig has concerns with the Mathewson kindergartners. This year alone there are 139 coming in. She questioned the space at Pumpkin and then for the first grade at Mathewson.

Dr. Polansky repeated there is no evidence of increasing enrollment. In fact, kindergarten enrollment has dropped by 20.

Mrs. C. Kopazna said the original goal was to place the kindergarteners back at Mathewson. The plan was not intended to be a permanent solution.

Chairman Hourigan asked for the costs associated with the enumeration. Mr. Russell said the final cost was \$32,000.

Dr. Polansky said the kindergarten situation is working now. The numbers will be checked every two years. Right now, this seems to be the best situation for Milford. Redistricting is costly and effects many people. For now, the recommendation is to not redistrict. The board can focus on Milford 2020 before making any boundary changes.

Chairman Hourigan asked Mrs. Stanford for a motion to approve consent agenda items.

Mrs. Stanford made and Mrs. Rohrig seconded the motion to approve Consent Agenda Item a. Motion passed.

New Business

Mrs. Stanford made and Mrs. Rohrig seconded the motion to approve the Acceptable Use of the Computers Policy with the changes recommended by administration. Motion passed.

Board Comment

Mrs. Staneski reported the Orange Avenue PTA meeting is October 22. The PTA strongly encourages board representation. She then responded publicly to the public comment made relative to the book titled "The Secret Life of Bees". She too has an avid reader and while she supports administrations decision, she asked administrators to be careful with the selection of the materials.

Dr. Polansky said he will reopen the discussion with the high schools next year.

Mrs. Casey then reported the Milford Legislative Act. Committee met recently. The committee will assist state and legislative representatives to get as much

money as we should be getting. The committee will also fully understand the legislative actions and serve as a clearinghouse for PTAs, groups etc. Mrs. Casey is the chair.

Chairman Hourigan asked for a motion to go into executive session.

Mrs. Stanford and Mrs. Rohrig made and seconded a motion to go into executive session to discuss matters pertaining to non-union and non-certified compensations. The board invited Dr. Polansky, Mrs. W. Kopazna, Mr. Russell and Mr. Cummings in to be a part of the discussion. The motion passed.

The board reconvened into public session at 12:05 a.m., August 19, 2008.

Being no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Mrs. Stanford and seconded by Mrs. Rohrig. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 12:08 a.m., August 19, 2008.

Respectfully submitted,

Greta Stanford
Majority Leader

Recorded by:

Pam Griffin