

Milford Board of Education

Meeting Minutes
August 19, 2013

Board members present:

Tracy Casey
Michael DeGrego
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
Wendy Kopazna

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Milford Board of Education held a meeting on Monday, August 19, 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. INTRODUCTION OF NEW ADMINISTRATOR

Dr. Feser introduced Mr. Max Berkowitz as the Principal of Joseph A. Foran High School. He came to Milford from Bunnell High School where he served the last 11 years as an assistant principal. He brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to Milford.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Tom Jagodzinski – 27 Berkley Terrace – Mr. Jagodzinski said the Parent Survey results show a strong indication that the current board is failing in its responsibility of keeping taxpayers informed of what is going on in the schools. He said recent state results showed the Milford K-8 schools ranked below average compared to similar districts except in 3rd grade writing. He further said that Milford high schools were ranked almost last in every category. He further said the Board has failed to have a substantive discussion about test scores.

V. CHAIR'S REPORT

Mrs. Casey told the Board the Long Range Planning Committee meetings have begun. The next meeting will be held on August 20th. Mrs. Alberta Jagoe has been named Chair, replacing Mr. Robert Blake who resigned last month. She then told the Board that a Committee Report will be given at the September Board meeting.

Mrs. Casey told the Board that the State released the CMT and CAPT data unusually late this year, thereby causing a delay in the specific presentation here in Milford. The administration will give a presentation on the data at the September Committee of the Whole meeting.

She then assured the public the Board continues to be focused on student achievement, noting that every meeting is reflective of student achievement.

VI. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mrs. Casey turned the meeting over to Dr. Feser.

Dr. Feser also addressed the delay in the CMT and CAPT data. She reported that administration is reviewing and analyzing the data now and will report to the Board at the September 23rd meeting. At that time, the administration will share information based on other indicators that show signs of improvement.

Dr. Feser then reported that the bus routes have been completed. Post cards have been mailed to the riders' homes and the routes will be posted on the website. She also shared that she and Mr. Richetelli had met with all of the Durham bus drivers the day prior to thank them for their service. Bus drivers were then provided updates and a review of new state laws.

Parent Survey

Dr. Feser, in introducing the Parent Survey, reminded the Board of its goal that was established two years ago focusing on strengthening relationships and increasing learning. The objective was to launch a survey that would determine the level of satisfaction with the Milford Public School system, and to develop a response. She told the Board that administration selected a local company, Panorama of New Haven, to administer the survey. Various groups of staff helped develop the questions to ensure the survey questions met Milford's needs.

Dr. Feser turned the meeting over to Mr. Scalice and Mrs. Krois who conducted much of the analysis of the results.

Mr. Scalice reported that 5,400 surveys were sent to the parent community via School Messenger (email) and U.S. mail. Of the 5,400 surveys sent, 2,385 responses were returned, a 44% response rate. Mr. Scalice then shared the results of the survey by district and by category. The categories were communication, instruction/instructional programs, operations, leadership, school climate and safety, and general satisfaction. The results were positive across all of the categories and schools.

Mrs. Krois then spoke of specific data responses. She began with Areas of Strength. Five questions centering on Children Feeling Safe and Connected had a better than 90% satisfaction rate. Three questions centering on Leadership Expectations for Students, e.g., "The principal keeps the school focused on academic achievement, reflected a 90+% rate of satisfaction." That school is a good place to learn was agreed to by 93% of parents while 88% agree that school buildings are clean and well-maintained.

Areas of Concern were also highlighted. Parental Involvement emerged from the data as an area where improvement is needed. For example, only 72% of parents agreed that, “The school offers me many ways to be involved in my child’s education,” and 77% agreed with that “My child’s teacher helps me understand how I can best support my child’s learning at home.” When the data are broken down by level, the percent satisfied decreases at the middle and high school. A second Area of Concern is bullying reflected in 19% of parents indicating that [their] “child has been a victim of bullying at school this school year.” Another Area to Explore had to do with the budget: only 62% agree “The district budget appropriately reflects student and school needs.”

Dr. Feser spoke to the Response Plan the district will pursue. It includes building principals analyzing their individual school’s data to target areas for improved communication; having each school create a Parent Involvement Committee focused on involvement in student learning; insure the definition of bullying is understood by all staff, students and administration as well as the steps to be taken when bullying is suspected or witnessed; complete the development the anti-bullying curriculum; analyze the correlation between parent data and the student and staff survey data on bullying. The district will also review grade level and individual school data for differences and seek additional data on areas of dissatisfaction, and ask for assistance from the PTAs; investigate ways to engage parents in the budget discussion and process at the building and district levels.

In closing, Dr. Feser said some of the responses indicated the need for additional questions in future administrations of the survey. She recommended the full survey be administered every three to five years. The state requires school districts annually to conduct School Culture and Climate Surveys. These will occur.

East Shore Middle School Project Update

Mr. Richetelli reported the construction project at East Shore Middle School has been moving along at an urgent pace. He reported that the plan calls for school to open on time but that not all phases of the project will be complete by then. The cafeteria and kitchen projects will not be ready until the fall. An alternative plan for serving lunch has been created that involves pre-packaged lunches being served in classrooms until the cafeteria is complete. Police have been secured to control traffic and maintain building security.

Mr. Richetelli told the Board once the building inspection occurs, and we are given the okay to open, the building will be turned over to the Milford Public Schools. At that time, maintenance and custodians will prepare the building for opening day. He noted the inspection is to occur later in the week.

Enrollment Report

Mr. Cummings provided an update on enrollment. Enrollment over the summer in grade 5 at Pumpkin Delight has warranted the need to add a fifth grade section as class sizes reached 25. He told the Board he continues to monitor the K-2 enrollment. Currently, there are still 3 budgeted, unassigned FTEs.

Human Resources Report

Mrs. Kopazna gave the Human Resources Report for the month of June. There are approximately five positions that still need to be filled before the start of school. Mrs. Kopazna assured the Board the administration is very close to wrapping up the openings for the 2013-14 school year.

Food Services Year End Report

Mrs. Faustich reported on the year-end financials for the Food Services Department. She then shared that the 2013-14 school lunch prices were going to increase slightly by 15 to 25 cents depending on the school level. Mrs. Faustich explained that although the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act is a good program, it does cost a little bit more to implement. The new prices for lunches will be: Elementary \$2.25, Middle \$2.50 and High School \$3.00. She reminded the Board that parents receive a discount when depositing funds in \$100 increments to the student's lunch account.

Mrs. Casey called for a recess at 8:32 p.m.

The meeting was called back to order at 8:40 p.m.

Mrs. Casey told the Board the minutes of the July 9th meeting would be tabled until the next meeting.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Ms. Glennon made a motion to approve Consent Agenda item

1. Disbursement Report

Ms. DiBiase seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

None.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

X. BOARD COMMENT

None.

Mrs. Casey told the Board the Executive Session is canceled.

Dr. Feser notified the Board that Mrs. Christina Magnuson has been assigned to necessary temporary duties primarily associated with supervision and evaluation of teachers, but including other duties for the 2013-14 school year. She indicated that the duties to be assumed by Mrs. Magnuson are temporary, not permanent. The funds for the temporary assignment will be managed within the current budget. She then announced she had filled the Foran Assistant Principal with Mr. William Vitelli.

Ms. Glennon requested the specifics of how the funds would be reallocated. Dr. Feser explained the funds will not amount to a full time salary. Some teaching positions have been filled by people on lower salary grades. The new principal hired at Foran will be on the lower end of the pay scale, and some retired teachers have been replaced by teachers new to the profession. In addition, if needed, some dollars from Title I could be used.

Approved

Mrs. Glennon told Dr. Feser that she feels the Board should be made aware of administrative changes when they occur.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Pam Griffin
Recording Secretary

Ms. Susan Glennon
Corresponding Secretary