

Milford Board of Education

Meeting Minutes
September 10, 2012

Board members present:

Tracy Casey
Suzanne DiBiase (arrived at 8:55)
George Gensure
Susan Glennon
Dora Kubek
James Maroney
Beverley Pierson
Christopher Saley
Mark Stapleton
Earl Whiskeyman

Administration present:

Dr. Elizabeth Feser
Michael Cummings
James Richetelli
Susan Kelleher
Wendy Kopazna

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Milford Board of Education held a board meeting on Monday, September 10, 2012 in the Board Room in the Parsons Complex. Mrs. Casey called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Dr. Feser introduced the administrators who were hired over the summer. They were:

Dr. Ralph Barbiero, Supervisor of Social Studies & World Language
Paul Cavanna, Assistant Principal Jonathan Law High School
Patricia Drew, Assistant Principal Jonathan Law High School
James Zavodjancik, Assistant Principal East Shore Middle School

Mr. Robert Swan was not present; however, he has been named Supervisor of Pupil Personnel, Middle School. Mr. Swan was an assistant principal at Jonathan Law High School.

Dr. Feser then introduced Nicole Wayne to the board. Ms. Wayne was named Milford's 2012 Teacher of the Year. Ms. Wayne gave a few brief comments explaining why she chose to be a teacher and the impact it has had on her.

III. STUDENT REPORTS

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

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Dave Dipasquale – 912 Wheelers Farms Road – Her daughter attends Trumbull VoAg. With the recent budget cuts, it was decided to eliminate a bus that transports students to the school. Therefore, the children will now be picked up at a bus depot. Her depot is 2.1 miles from her house. Her daughter will need to walk on a very busy road without sidewalks to and from the stop. She asked the board to review the stops and make necessary changes.

Kelly Courville – 42 Golden Hill Road – She is a student at Trumbull VoAg. Last year she got picked up at her front door. This year she has to go to one of the depots. She is getting dropped off at Jonathan Law and walking home. It takes her 45 minutes to walk home. Her mother has asked if the parents can pay for a bus. No one has responded to her.

Mark Provenzano – 45 Bayshore Drive – He read the Board of Education's Mission Statement. He told the board he has three daughters; one of which attends Trumbull VoAg. The students who attend the Trumbull VoAg program were not given sufficient notice of the transportation changes. He cited the legalities pertaining to the law related to transporting students. He believes administration is in violation of the law. He told the board to reconsider. He also mentioned that the issue would be challenged.

Tom Beirne – 55 Bayshore Drive – Mr. Beirne is a neighbor and former aldermen. He told the board he watches the busses go right by the houses. Why can't something be done to allow students to be picked up and dropped off at another location along the way? His main reason for attending the meeting was to support his neighbor who attends Trumbull VoAg.

Alex Simone – 32 Pearson Avenue – Alex is a student in the Trumbull VoAg program. She gets picked up at 6:00 a.m. and dropped off at home at 3:45 p.m. She does not know how she is going to get her homework done. She has to get a job. Please reconsider the transportation.

Mary Wydra – 40 Peachtree Lane – Mrs. Wydra's daughter attends Trumbull VoAg. The transportation has really burdened the families. While it has been somewhat easier to get the children to school, the drop off is causing a hardship. She would like administration to work with the parents to come up with a solution for all.

Christy Griswold – Benjamin Heights – She is concerned about walking to her bus stop. It seems hazardous. She has to walk on Grinnell and there aren't any sidewalks. When it snows she will have to walk in the road. She asked administration look into the routes.

Carol Thomas – 84 Thompson – She has two sons who attend West Shore. Five children attend West Shore who live on her street. She told the board safety should be the priority. Last year a change was made for one child. She also told the board Willow is a narrow street. The bus stop should be changed for a few reasons. All of which are about the safety of the children. She asked the board to reconsider changing the stop.

Janet Couriville – 42 Golden Hill Road – She is a single mother of a child who attends Trumbull VoAg. She feels notice was not given to the students attending the program. This has caused a hardship. She asked the board to reconsider adding a bus for the Trumbull VoAg transportation.

Rachel Yadzick – 94 Thompson Street – Her son attends West Shore. There aren't any sidewalks for him to walk on to get to the bus stop. The children will stand on Surf Avenue, which is a busy road. This is not safe for the children. She asked the board to look into the stop and consider changing it.

Stacy Godek – 154 Mary Ellen Drive – Mrs. Godek asked the board to change the language in the “peanut” letter that is sent home to parents. She further said that any communication regarding “nuts” should be listed as “nut free” instead of “peanut free”.

Cathy Berni – 96 Centennial Drive – Mrs. Berni commended the administration for implementing the Summer School Program. She told the board it was organized, structured and great. She thanked administration for their excellent work.

Gary Tobin – 27 Thompson Street – Mr. Tobin wanted to publicly thank Mr. Marino for his work with the Jonathan Law Band. He has worked tirelessly to support the children in the program. He then distributed the Law Band Guard Handbook. He invited anyone to attend the upcoming annual Home Show on October 27th at 6:00 p.m.

V. CHAIR'S REPORT

Mrs. Casey told the public that it has been eleven years since the horrific events of 9/11 occurred. She feels it is important to recognize 9/11. She then showed a 9/11 video that showed the progression of a child's life who lost her father in the attacks of 9/11.

Mrs. Casey also mentioned to the public that Milford Public Schools busses many kids who attend programs outside of Milford. She explained the children attending Aquaculture and ECA are bussed from their respective home high school. The children attending Trumbull VoAg cost the district 10 times more money to be transported. Each student is costing the district \$1,500 to be transported. She further said the administration found a way to keep the high schools open and the students could be bussed to school. They would be allowed to stay at the school until a parent could pick them up.

Mrs. Casey told the public administration has researched ways to help the parents without adding financial burden to the taxpayers. However, she would ask administration to look into the bus stops one more time.

IV. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Back to School Report

Dr. Feser gave a brief Back to School Report. She began with Opening Convocation that was held on August 28th. Many City officials were in attendance. Speakers included Mayor Blake, Mrs. Casey, Chief LaVecchia and herself. She told the board it was the kindergartners who stole the show with their musical performance to close the program.

Dr. Feser then reported that 6600 students attended the first day of school on August 29th. Ninety-nine percent of vacancies have been filled. The year is off to a good start. She then shared some of the changes for the new year. Those include:

- Math Investigations implementation in grade 3
- Conversion of K-2 schools from Macs to PCs
- Implementation of Spanish I in grade 7
- All buildings are wireless
- Partial implementation of a new Teacher Evaluation Plan

Summer School Update

Mr. Cummings shared the results of the attendance of the summer school programs. The attendance was not as high as administration wanted. However, this is the first year the program was offered. Mr. Cummings also noted that some changes will be made for next summer. Marketing and timing could be factored in.

Mr. Saley asked if there were classes that could be done differently to keep the children in the program. Mr. Cummings told him that the communication will be made sooner next year.

Mr. Saley asked him if the classes were air conditioned. Mr. Cummings told him maintenance tried to keep the staff and students comfortable.

Mr. Cummings then introduced Ms. Luisi to update the board on her program.

Ms. Luisi Director K-5 Summer School Program reported that approximately 200 children were accommodated this past summer. She felt the timing of notification did affect some families. The notification went out in late May. She further explained that there was a small charge for the program with the incentive that if you attend 17 of the 19 days, your money would be refunded. She had a very positive outcome with very few not meeting the expectation. Upon completion of the program, she sent the staff survey's to get their feedback. All teachers said they would return to do it next year. She then gave an overview of the daily structure of the program.

Mrs. Casey asked if administration would be tracking the children that attended the program. She was told yes.

Mr. Cummings thanked Mr. Luisi for her support and guidance.

Mr. Cummings introduced Mr. Barbiero to discuss the AP Summer Academy. Mr. Barbiero, with the assistance of some students, shared some of the successes of the AP Summer School Academy.

9/11 Curriculum

Mr. Cummings shared the work that was put into developing the 9/11 curriculum which is being piloted to grades 6 through 12 this year. He explained a group of high school Social Studies teachers visited the Tribute Center, an awareness center located at Ground Zero. Conversation led to the idea of a curriculum to educate our youth. Ms. Mannion and Ms. Rowley navigated through a PowerPoint explaining the mission, framework and curriculum's focus. The PowerPoint is on file. The initiative was well received!

Mrs. Casey thanked the Ms. Mannion and Ms. Rowley for their efforts.

Enrollment Report

Mr. Cummings reported 1.3 FTE is still unassigned. He then told the board there is a change to the kindergarten classes at Live Oaks. A class has been added bringing the total to six kindergarten classes at Live Oaks. Mr. Cummings then told the board he is looking at where the priority need is to assign it.

Ms. DiBiase asked if the total enrollment is more or less than last year. Mr. Cummings told her it is less but he didn't know by how much.

Mr. Whiskeyman asked to see the prior year's changes to the October 1 enrollment spreadsheet.

Human Resources Report

Mrs. Kopazna reported on the personnel changes in the last month. She told the board 25 teachers and six new administrators were hired over the summer.

Ms. Glennon asked if any interns had been hired. Mrs. Kopazna told her no. However, 14 have been hired over the past eight years. She then told the board that the students participate in a graduate program with the universities which require an internship working in a school district, as a teacher. The universities contract with school systems. They offer an intern to work within the district for one year. However, there is no obligation on Milford Public Schools to hire the intern.

A conversation ensued.

Mrs. Casey suggested that the language be changed in the agreement so there isn't confusion. Maybe the language could state "you may or may not be hired."

Mrs. Casey asked for a motion to move the Smoke and Tobacco Policy to Unfinished Business.

Mr. Maroney made a motion to move policies 1331 and 4116.2 to Unfinished Business. Dr. Stapleton seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Maroney made a motion to approve Consent Agenda items 1. Consideration of Minutes - August 13, 2012 and September 4, 2012 and 3. Disbursement Report. Dr. Stapleton seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Maroney made a motion to approve Policies 1331 and 4116.2 "Smoke and Tobacco Free Environment". Dr. Stapleton seconded.

Mrs. Casey asked that the language be changed from Milford Board of Education to Milford Public Schools.

With the language change, the motion passed unanimously.

X. BOARD COMMENT

Ms. Glennon told the board she attended the PTA Council.

Mr. Whiskeyman told the board that ACES will hold a board meeting on Thursday.

Mr. Saley asked Mr. Richetelli a question about the Disbursement Report.

Ms. Glennon called for a Point of Order.

Mrs. Casey told Mr. Saley Disbursement Reports could not be discussed because it fell under the Consent Agenda Items.

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 9:35, Mr. Maroney made a motion to adjourn to executive session to discuss the evaluation of the Superintendent. Dr. Stapleton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

XII. RECONVENE

At 10:15 p.m., Mr. Maroney made a motion to go into Public Session. Mr. Gensure seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Maroney made a motion to amend Item 3 “Term” of Superintendent Feser’s contract to be from July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2015 with a cash component increase of 1.5% effective July 1, 2012 with all other terms of the contract to stay intact. Ms. Glennon seconded.

Dr. Stapleton told the board he is not in favor of the amount of the increase. He feels it should be a more significant increase.

Ms. DiBiase agrees with Dr. Stapleton.

Mrs. Casey called for a vote.

After a roll call vote, the motion passed 6-4 (DiBiase, Stapleton, Whiskeyman & Saley-No).

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

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

Approved

Meeting adjourned at 10:20 p.m.

Pam Griffin
Recording Secretary

James Maroney
Corresponding Secretary