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Milford Board of Education

Board Meeting Minutes
November 24, 2014

Board members present:

Michael DeGrego
John DeRosa
Suzanne DiBiase
Laura Fucci
Jennifer Federico (6:34 p.m.)
Susan Glennon, Chair
Dr. Heidi Gold-Dworkin via SKYPE
C. Robert Satti, Jr.
Earl Whiskeyman

Administration present:

Dr. Elizabeth Feser
Michael Cummings
Jim Richetelli

Board members absent:

Anthony Piselli

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Glennon called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Board of Education Room at the Parsons Complex. She then announced Dr. Heidi Gold-Dworkin would attend via SKYPE and Mr. Piselli will be absent.

She asked everyone join in the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. Glennon turned the meeting over to Mr. Richetelli to give the Athletics Report.

II. ATHLETIC PROGRAM ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT 2013-14

Mr. Richetelli introduced athletic directors Mr. Sarullo and Mr. Vitelli to the Board. He then presented the athletics financial report for the 2013-14 fiscal year. He noted 24 sports are offered through the Milford Public Schools, and are sanctioned by the CIAC. Other opportunities, such as Unified Sports, Powder Puff and Fencing Club are also offered, however, they are not sanctioned by the CIAC.

Mr. Richetelli gave a breakdown of the funds, by sport, remarking the funds are split between two accounts. The general funds account covers the cost of coaches' salaries, transportation, trainers, insurance, equipment and supplies and uniforms. The athletic activities account covers the costs of officials, referees, part-time staff such as ticket takers, announcers and police officers. He noted the Board of Education has supplemented the athletic activities account from the general fund to pay for game day operations because ticket sales are not sufficient to cover all game day expenses. Hockey is offered through a coop program which has students from Jonathan Law, Joseph A. Foran and Platt Tech, and continues to be the only sport that requires a student participation fee.

III. UPDATE OF SUMMER PROJECTS 2014

Mr. Bradbury narrated a pictorial PowerPoint presentation (on file) that outlined the work that was done to the buildings and grounds over the summer and answered questions from the Board.

Mr. Bradbury concluded his presentation with the introduction of Mr. Hayden, custodian supervisor and Mrs. Rutherford, maintenance secretary.

Ms. Glennon called for a recess at 8:40 p.m.

The meeting called back to order at 8:46 p.m.

Ms. Glennon turned the meeting over to Dr. Feser.

IV. REDISTRICTING CRITERIA

Dr. Feser explained there are currently 14 redistricting criteria being considered by the Board. Four were established by the Long Range Planning Committee, and 10 were added by the Board during its initial meeting with the consultant. The consultant has requested that the Board send them a list of its preferred criteria.

Dr. Feser indicated it was important to first be sure the Board had a common understanding of each criteria. She then asked Board members to share their understanding of the criterion.

As the Board discussed the criterion, the first four criteria were understood.

1. Where possible strive for direct feeders or progress larger groups of students
2. Mitigate impact on students already redistricted through phasing and/or grandfathering/ remain cognizant of and sensitive to those families
3. Adhere to natural boundaries to the greatest extent feasible
4. Minimize student travel time and transportation costs

However, bullet number 5 required clarification.

5. Maintain walking policy and walkers

Mrs. Federico believes that students who have a school located within a mile should not be assigned to another school.

Mr. Satti, Mr. Whiskeyman and Mr. DeRosa thought the criteria should be in alignment with the transportation policy.

Dr. Feser pointed out that all walkers might not fit in a school that is located within walking distance.

Mrs. Federico suggested that the language could change to read, “all walkers should remain walkers.”

No changes were made to bullet 5. The Board chose to come back to it after reviewing the other criteria.

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6. Ensure sustainability of new districts so that MPS does not have to redistrict in the near future
Ms. Glennon said it means to take into consideration the enrollment patterns and new boundaries so we don't end up with a larger enrollment at one school and have to redistrict in a few years.

Mrs. Federico added "and relying on the enrollment projections we have."

7. Balance enrollments to ensure parity in available resources across schools
Mrs. Fucci said the meaning is to make sure all schools are equitable, to allow for the same programs and to make sure that no schools are overcrowded.

Ms. Glennon noted the language could read balancing out the enrollment so the schools can have parity in the resources.

8. Maintain class sizes
All agreed.

9. Ensure flexibility for program expansion
Mr. Satti said the Board should determine having 85% usage in every school as suggested by the consultant.

Mrs. Fucci feels it means if there is an influx at a certain grade level you have enough room to add another classroom.

Mrs. Federico recalled the conversation about adding a dedicated science room at every elementary school.

Ms. Glennon also recalled the additional preschool classrooms that the board approved for this year.

10. Strive for centrality of schools within their respective districts
Ms. Glennon said it means trying to keep the school in the center of the district.

11. Keep neighborhoods together, not necessarily at their current schools
Mrs. Fucci said it would be okay to move a neighborhood together to another school.

12. Avoid unequal distribution of redistricting burden
Ms. Glennon said it means not making one school bear the brunt of redistricting.

13. Avoid over-burdening any school with socio-economic need of students
Mr. Satti feels that socio-economic needs to be defined.

Mr. Whiskeyman believes it means "free and reduced lunch children."

Mrs. Fucci believes that the meaning is to have enough resource rooms for students who have socio-economic needs.

Dr. Feser recalls Mr. Cummings suggested the definition to mean avoid having all of the Title I schools on one side of town.

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14. Remain cognizant and sensitive to Special Ed/ self-contained program needs

Mr. Satti suggested the Board have a clear understanding of the Special Ed/self-contained.

Mrs. Fucci said it means to make sure there is enough room for self-contained classrooms and appropriate program space for related services.

The Board members were clear on the definition of each criterion.

Mr. Cummings then led a discussion with the Board in hopes of combining, changing or eliminating language in the criterion.

Mr. Satti recommended striking the first bullet, “Where possible strive for direct feeders or progress larger groups of students.” Mr. DeRosa agreed. Mrs. Fucci asked to table it until further discussion.

Mrs. Fucci recommended the elimination of “Strive for centrality of schools within their respective districts” because of the proximity of the elementary schools. All agreed.

Ms. Glennon recommended the elimination of “Maintain class sizes” because it is already part of the Board’s practice. All agreed.

Mr. DeRosa suggested the elimination of “Minimize student travel time and transportation costs” because it is an assumption. The Board would not want to increase costs due to bussing. However, the Board chose not to eliminate it at that time.

Dr. Feser directed the conversation back to the first bullet “Where possible strive for direct feeders or progress larger groups of students.” The Board was mixed on the decision to eliminate the criteria. Therefore, the criteria was not eliminated.

The Board agreed to combine Adhere to natural boundaries to the greatest extent feasible and Keep neighborhoods together, not necessarily at their current schools. It will now read, “Adhere to natural boundaries and keep neighborhoods together to the greatest extent feasible.”

Ms. Glennon suggested the elimination of the criteria “Maintain walking policy and walkers” because the Board will maintain the policy.

Mrs. Federico felt it was important to keep the criteria with a language change to read, “To keep walkers at a school they can walk to.”

A Board discussion ensued. It was agreed to change the language to “Keep walkers as walkers.”

The Board then discussed “grandfathering” in bullet 2. Again, Mr. Satti suggested the Board clearly define grandfathering before moving forward. Grandfathering could have various meanings, i.e. existing 4th graders continue at same school or any student continues at the same school. Ms. Glennon told the Board that any parent can request that their student attend a specific school. However, they would need to get approval from administration. It should be managed on a case by case basis. The Board struck out “through

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phasing and/or grandfathering from bullet 2. The criteria will now read, “Mitigate impact on students already redistricted and remain cognizant of and sensitive to those families.”

Being no further changes to the existing criteria, Dr. Feser then led the Board in an exercise that would narrow the criteria down to the five or so most critical when determining the redistricting. She indicated it would be up to the board to decide how many criteria to include on the list sent to the consultant.

The Board members were provided colored dots to assign to what each thought was to be the most critical criterion. The exercise was performed three times before the top seven prevailed. However, the agreement was to have five criteria. Dr. Feser summarized the three exercises and showed how the top five were consistent in all three exercises. It was evident that five were the most important to all Board members. It was also clear that two were viewed as important but slightly less than the top five. Those were:

- Keep walkers as walkers
- Ensure sustainability of new districts so that MPS does not have to redistrict in the near future

Ms. Glennon confirmed the Board wanted to stay with five criteria. She then asked for a motion.

Mrs. Fucci made a motion that the Board of Education approves the following preferred redistricting criteria.

- Adhere to natural boundaries and keep neighborhoods together to the greatest extent feasible
- Balance enrollments to ensure parity in available resources across schools
- Minimize student travel time and transportation costs
- Mitigate impact on students already redistricted and remain cognizant of and sensitive to those families
- Avoid unequal distribution of redistricting burden

Mr. DeRosa seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The preferred redistricting criteria will be forwarded to Milone and MacBroom. Ms. Glennon will work with Milone and MacBroom to determine when the first iteration of redistricting information will be provided to the Board.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. DeRosa made a motion to adjourn. Mrs. Fucci seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Approved

Mrs. Pam Griffin
Recording Secretary

Mrs. Laura Fucci
Corresponding Secretary