

Milford Board of Education

Business Meeting and Live Streamed on YouTube

Meeting Minutes

October 11, 2021

Board members present:

Adam De Young
Meghan Doyle
Andrew Fowler
Susan Glennon (Board Chair)
Rita Hennessey
Emily McDonough Souza
Warren Pawlowski
Una Petroske
Betsy Ratner
Cindy Wolfe Boynton

Administration present:

Dr. Anna Cutaia
Dr. Amy Fedigan
Wendy Kopazna
Jim Richetelli
Chris Brown

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Glennon called the board meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. By a roll call, ten Board members were present. Ms. Glennon then led the Board in the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

She went over housekeeping which included wearing masks at all times while inside a school building and during public comment. This is in compliance with the Governor's executive orders and guidance from the Health Department.

Ms. Glennon then moved Student Reports before Agenda item III, Public Comment. She then called for the student reports.

II. STUDENT REPORTS

Jackson Warters and Aidan King presented the report for Law. David Gaetano and Arezoo Ghazagh presented the report for Foran.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Glennon read the Public Comment statement.

Wally Hauck - 39 Lookout Hill Road - Mr. Hauck is amazed by the strategy of the Board, blaming America for the district's assessment results. When you blame America you release the responsibility for what we have control over. Leaders don't blame.

Christopher Thomas- 8 Argyle Road - Mr. Thomas is very satisfied with the education his children are receiving. His daughter wants to know more about Homecoming. His 8th grader wants more walking breaks. He supports social and emotional learning. He thanked the staff, administration and the Board for their work.

Dr. Matt Paterna - He is a longtime Milford resident with kids in the system. He objects to mandates for vaccinations. Fully objects to kids vaccines. He would like to have a conversation with Deepa Joseph and/or Dr. Andy Carlson in public.

Terri Smith - 90 Snowapple Lane - She would like to know what the new counselor positions will be responsible for.

Nicole O'Neil - 54 Bryan Hill Road - Ms. O'Neil heard that teachers who are vaccinated and test positive for COVID can still go to school and work and wondered if this was true.

Deb McKenna 94 Seaside Avenue - Ms. McKenna is very happy with the education her children have been receiving, particularly how it relates to current events and history. She encouraged the Board to stay the course and listen to the majority of parents who think the Board is doing a great job.

Sara Bromley 27 Norway Street - Mrs. Bromley read a statement from her husband which supports critical thinking as defined as objective analysis. She thanked the Board for their bravery and told them to stay the course.

Jennifer Federico - 796 East Broadway - Thanked the Board and administration for finding safe and creative ways to keep students learning. Many parents appreciate it. Parents do deserve a voice, however, there are many ways to do it including PTA involvement. Students, educators and the health care community also have a voice. There are many voices and different opinions that deserve to be heard. In the end, you have to consider what is best for the students.

IV. CHAIR'S REPORT

Ms. Glennon removed the minutes from the September 27 meeting from the consent agenda and added them to New Business for a correction. She told the Board there are two more meetings in the current term. She reminded all that public comment at the Committee of the Whole meeting on the 25th is limited to agenda items only. She then circled back to the Vision Statement that was adopted by the Board in her first term that states Milford will be a progressive school district in which students are prepared to achieve at their highest level surrounded by an engaged community that is proud of its education system. The Board has stayed true to that vision and has accomplished a lot together despite $\frac{2}{3}$ of the term being consumed by a pandemic. She mentioned some of the accomplishments and initiatives that have come to fruition. She thinks all should be proud of what has been accomplished.

Ms. Glennon called for liaison reports.

Ms. Glennon told the Board she attended PTA Council.

She then turned the meeting over the Superintendent for her report.

V. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Instructional Highlight - Middle School Schedule

A representative group of the middle school committee gave an update to the Board on Phase 1 of the revised middle school schedule.

Ms. Keramis and Mrs. Swanson narrated the presentation which highlighted the innovative shifts that support MPS' model for HQI as well as the features of the revised schedule that will advance the competencies and indicators outlined in MPS' Vision of the Learner and Instructional Framework. The middle school schedule will go from 40 minute blocks to 80 minute instructional blocks. There are eight blocks total, only four blocks are taught each day. Some highlights of the changes include: Academic Success & Acceleration (ASA) for 30 minutes a day that could include: Dedicated time for Acceleration, Group Counseling/Individual Counseling, Student Supports, IEP service hours and 504 service hours. There will be time for Morning Meeting during homeroom, addition of grade 6 technology, comprehensive school counseling for all (Embedded in Health), enrichment clusters for all, dedicated time for team collaboration, prep every day and equity of access for students and teachers. Will also allow for no split lunches where a class was interrupted by a lunch wave.

Board member questions were answered. It was confirmed that students are not sitting at desks for the entire block. A benefit of the schedule is longer periods of uninterrupted time for student collaboration and students are able to move around.

Teacher Evaluation Plan

Dr. Fedigan shared that the Board approved the revised teacher evaluation plan that was recommended by the Professional Development and Evaluation Committee (PDEC) and administration in 2020, however, it was not fully implemented as the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) extended Educator Evaluation flexibilities to support teaching and learning efforts during the pandemic. The CSDE has extended new Educator Evaluation Flexibilities again this year. Those flexibilities align with work already in progress in the district such as the overall well-being of students, staff and educators, building relationships and supporting a culture of learning and growth. In summary, the learning goals will remain in place. Observations will be more frequent and shorter with high quality written and verbal feedback. There will not be a waiver for summative ratings for the 2021-2022 school year. The flexibilities are intended to be supportive and facilitate dialogue between educator and administrator who are working together in support of advancing student learning needs.

Questions from board members were answered. The Board requested the memo from the CSDE be shared with them.

Ms. Glennon called for a motion to approve the Professional Learning and Teacher Effectiveness & Performance Plan (PL/TEPE).

Mrs. Petroske made a motion that the Milford Board of Education approves the 2021 CSDE issued flexibilities for educator evaluation as applied to the Professional Learning and Teacher Effectiveness & Performance Plan. Mr. Fowler seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

October 1 Enrollment Report

Dr. Cutaia shared the October 1 enrollment report with the Board. Of note, there are three lenses to consider when looking at the enrollment, (1) actual enrollment of October 1, 2021, compared to October 1, 2020, (2) the actual enrollment compared to projections and (3) a year-to-year retention. The actual enrollment is down by 24 students from the October 1, 2020 report.

When looking at the enrollment number compared to projections, the district was 21 students above the projection. This was thought to be due to the housing market as Milford had a lot of families move in.

Cohort retention demonstrates that the district has 33 more kids in our elementary enrollment numbers and 17 more kids in middle school. The high school enrollment is down 27 kids. Dr. Cutaia also provided the Board with the numbers of students who leave MPS to go to St. Mary School (15) compared to the number of students who transferred in from St. Mary School to MPS (26).

Dr. Cutaia said 11 percent of freshmen decided not to attend a high school in Milford Public Schools. However, the number of freshmen going to a private school is down 19 from last year. She dispelled the rumor that children are fleeing the district. The data provided shows that is not true.

Proposed 2022-23 Budget Priorities and Assumptions

Dr. Cutaia presented the 2022-23 budget priorities and assumptions to the Board for approval. They were reviewed by the Board at the September committee of the whole meeting. At that meeting, the Board had requested some changes be made and they are now ready for approval.

Ms. Glennon called for a motion.

Mrs. Petroske made a motion that the Milford Board of Education approves the 2022-23 Budget Priorities and Assumptions as amended. Mr. Fowler seconded. By a roll call vote of 9-1 (Fowler), the motion passed.

Board Policies

Dr. Cutaia presented four policies for approval by the Board and one policy to be rescinded. The policies were reviewed and discussed at the September committee of the whole meeting where some changes were requested and have been made.

Mrs. Petroske made a motion that the Milford Board of Education approves the Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace policy 4118.232/4218.232 as presented. Mr. Fowler seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Petroske made a motion that the Milford Board of Education rescind the prior Alcohol and Drugs policy 4118.231/4118/232. Mr. Fowler seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Petroske made a motion that the Milford Board of Education approves the Required COVID-19 Vaccinations policy 4118.239/4218.239 as presented. Mr. Fowler seconded. By a roll call vote of 9-1 (Fowler), the motion passed.

Mrs. Petroske made a motion that the Milford Board of Education approves the Psychotropic Drug Use policy 4118.234/5141.231 as presented. Mr. Fowler seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Petroske made a motion that the Milford Board of Education approves the Internet Acceptable Use: Filtering policy 6141.323 as presented. Mr. Fowler seconded. The motion passed.

Quarterly Budget Report

Mr. Richetelli spoke to highlights of the quarterly budget report for the first quarter. Those included certified teachers, retirements, special education and utilities. He also told the Board the report will show deficits in some accounts (furniture and equipment) that will be covered by the ARP grant. He assured the Board that administration does not foresee any major issues projecting out to the end of the year.

Mr. De Young asked about using the non-lapsing account for the increase in price for utilities.

Human Resources Report

Ms. Kopazna presented the Human Resources Report for September. Included in the report were the personnel changes as well as stipend appointments. She has received one retirement to date.

Disbursement Report

Mr. Richetelli presented the Disbursement Report for the month of September. The report continues to call attention to COVID related expenses in yellow.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Mrs. Petroske made a motion that the Milford Board of Education approves Consent Agenda Item:

Consideration of Minutes:

September 13, 2021 Business Meeting

Mr. Fowler seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Mrs. Petroske made a motion that the Milford Board of Education approves the minutes from the September 27, 2021 as presented. Mr. Fowler seconded the motion.

Mrs. Petroske made a motion to amend the minutes to strike the word “virtual” from the meeting minutes. Mr. Fowler seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Glennon repeated the main motion to approve the minutes as amended. Mr. Fowler seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. BOARD COMMENT

Mr. De Young told the Board that his daughters learned a history lesson being in session on Columbus Day.

Mr. Pawlowski thanked the administration and Board for their work during his tenure. It is not an easy job and he really appreciates the work that has been done.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Petroske made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Fowler seconded. Seeing no objections, Ms. Glennon adjourned the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

Recording Secretary: _____
Mrs. Pam Griffin

Corresponding Secretary: _____
Mrs. Una Petroske