

Milford Board of Education

Meeting Minutes
February 25, 2013

Board members present:

Tracy Casey
Suzanne DiBiase
Susan Glennon
Dora Kubek
Beverley Pierson
Christopher Saley
Mark Stapleton
Earl Whiskeyman

Administration present:

Dr. Elizabeth Feser
Michael Cummings
James Richetelli
Susan Kelleher

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Milford Board of Education held a board meeting on Monday, February 25, 2013 in the Board Room in the Parsons Complex. Mrs. Casey called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. with the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Casey welcomed to Laura Fetter to the board.

Mrs. Casey reminded the board members that Dr. Stapleton will resign as of February 28th. Dr. Stapleton has been on the board for more than 7 years. In those seven years, it has always been “about the kids” with Dr. Stapleton. She then presented him with a plaque and thanked him for his focus and dedication to the students in Milford.

II. MAGNET SCHOOLS

Dr. Feser began by stating that the Board has asked for information on magnet schools. Tonight’s presentation addresses what is a magnet school, funding, tuition and more. She then shared a PowerPoint (on file) with the board and spoke to it. Milford does not pay tuition for students who attend New Haven Magnet Schools. However, if a student attends magnet schools operated by RESCs, Milford is expected to pay tuition. The sending district is then compensated with the ECS funding. She further explained that magnet schools are responsible for providing transportation to students attending their schools. School districts may, but are not required to, provide transportation for their students attending magnet schools. For example, Milford transports students to the half day ECA program. The state then reimburses Milford for the transportation costs for \$18,727 based on student attendance.

Mrs. Casey asked if a grant could be used to offset the costs of participation in a program. She specifically recalled a grant covering the costs associated with the ECA program when her son attended. Administration told her that no such grant monies are being used for the costs associated with ECA. She then asked administration to look into it.

Dr. Feser also explained if a child enrolls in a magnet school, our district will not know until it happens. She also noted that the magnet schools may offer children other opportunities than Milford. For example, Betsy Ross in New Haven caters to the arts. So if a child is determined to pursue a career in dance, one might attend Betsy Ross.

Mrs. Casey asked how we can sell Milford Public Schools better to retain our students. Dr. Feser told her that one way is by offering more Advanced Placement course offerings. Those courses are looked at by colleges.

A board discussion ensued.

Mrs. Casey thanked administration for the overview. However, it would be better served to have a grid that shows the following information:

Tuition/Students/School/Bus Transportation/Reimbursements, if special education “is a Para needed?”

Dr. Feser told the board that at this time there is a moratorium on the building of magnet schools with the exception of Hartford, New Haven and Waterbury. She assumes it is for budgetary reasons.

Mrs. Casey said we need to do more to keep our children in district.

Dr. Feser told the board the Mrs. Bonetti has been working on a high school brochure that will highlight what we offer to students.

Mr. Whiskeyman said he always thought Milford is a well-rounded district with nice offerings. Kids don’t know what field they want to work in during the high school years. The magnet schools are more specialized in a field.

Dr. Feser noted that the district needs to work on communicating its AP offerings.

Mrs. Casey thanked the administration for the presentation. She is looking forward to seeing the grid containing all the information to do a comparison.

III. ADULT EDUCATION UPDATE

Mr. Cummings narrated a PowerPoint beginning the with Adult Education’s Mission Statement. “The Adult Education program of the Milford Public Schools is committed to fulfilling the ongoing educational needs of all citizens. To this end the program will support the achievement of a high school diploma, the acquisition of English and United States citizenship skills, and development of adults’ interests through high quality instructional programs. The program is designed to meet the needs of all ages, all cultures, and all abilities. We promote lifelong learners.”

He explained there two types of programs offered; mandated programs and general interest programs. Mandated programs include ESL as required by the Connecticut General Statute. General interest courses

Approved

are curriculum offerings left to the discretion of the district. If a district chooses not to provide the mandated programs, it would need to pay another town so its residents could attend them.

He then provided enrollment numbers both in the mandated and the general interest program over the past three years. He reviewed the financials with the board.

Ms. Glenn on asked how the instructors are paid? Mr. Cummings told her the instructors are paid on a quarterly basis.

Mrs. Casey told the administration it would be helpful if the board could be provided a breakdown of the mandated program costs.

Ms. Glennon would like to have the general interest enrollment back two years prior (08-09 & 09-10).

Mr. Saley asked if expenses could be reduced by putting the information online. He noted between the catalog and postage is more than \$10,000. He also said he thinks the courses are good.

Mr. Richetelli told him that catalog is online.

Ms. Glennon asked if the mandate dictated the courses be mailed to the homes? She asked if the director's salary was a stipend and if it increased every year as per the contract.

Mr. Cummings told her the director's salary was a stipend and follows the contract.

Before moving onto the field trips, Mrs. Casey asked if there was clarification on the nurse's signatures. In fact, why does the board need to sign off. She asked administration to review the policy for further clarification.

Dr. Feser told her that she had not received the clarification yet. She told Mrs. Casey that she will follow up with Dr. McBride regarding the signature. She agreed the policy needs to be reviewed. She will bring a proposal back to the board.

Ms. Glennon made a motion to approve two field trips: Law Vermont Ski Trip (March 1-3) and the Foran Wrestling Field (March 1 & 2) Trip. Ms. DiBiase seconded. The motion passed.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Cathy Berni – 96 Centennial Drive – She told the board that her daughter attends a magnet school. The school is absolutely beautiful and has many offerings that Milford does not. Her daughter is also in enrichment and they push her very much. She is being challenged so far beyond then what Milford could offer her. The enrichment program in Milford is in need of review. She also noted the decision is based on the child's needs.

IV. BOARD COMMENT

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Mrs. Casey said that it is very discouraging to hear that if a child needed to be pushed they would need to leave the district. If in fact that is the case, we need to look into why this would be happening. The board feels that we provide the same level of educational expectations in Milford. Milford is providing opportunities and Milford has an excellent education.

Dr. Stapleton thanked the administration and the board for working with him over the years. It truly has been a learning experience. He has learned more about education than he thought he would learn. He has so much respect and admiration for teachers and administrators. He told the board he would do it again if he had the opportunity. He further said there were not always good things that came with the position, but he felt as if the board was always trying to make the system better. He wished everyone well.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Glennon made a motion to adjourn. Dr. Stapleton seconded. The motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Pam Griffin
Recording Secretary

Susan Glennon
Corresponding Secretary