

MILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
Committee of the Whole Meeting
April 28, 2008

The Milford Board of Education held a meeting on Monday, April 28, 2008 in the Board of Education Meeting Room of the Parsons Complex. Board Chairman, David Hourigan called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. asking everyone to join him in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Board Members Present

Mr. D. Amendola
Mrs. T. Casey
Chairman D. Hourigan
Mr. J. Quish
Mrs. J. Rohrig
Mrs. P. Staneski
Mrs. G. Stanford
Mr. D. Steinlauf

Absent

Mrs. C. Kopazna (business matter)
Mr. Santa Barbara (family matter)

Chairs Report

Chairman Hourigan began his report by telling the board he attended the Kids Count breakfast for Pre-K. He commended Ms. Peggy Kelly on her great work.

He reminded the board there will be a Legislative Breakfast with Speaker Amann in Hartford on April 30th at 8:30 a.m. and the Board of Aldermen Budget Hearing at 7:00 p.m.

He, along with administration and other board members attended a meeting with the City Planner, Dave Sulkis to discuss future development. He was told the development of Wheelers Farm is at least 10 years out and would provide 200 more houses. The average household would have 1.2 children.

Dr. Polansky added that May is "Older Americans Month". Mrs. Bonetti recently created a pamphlet for the seniors. The intent is to create sustained relationships with our senior citizens.

Dr. Polansky then updated the board on some efforts made to update the website.

High School Reform

Mr. Cummings and Janet Garagliano made a presentation to the board on the State's High School Reform package.

In summary, the plan would require an additional 2.0 credits to the existing curriculum.

High school credits are only one aspect of this reform. The reform would also create additional staffing needs. About 20% of our students do not take a foreign language. To meet the proposed request, 4.0 Spanish teachers would be needed. Staffing would also be required in Art, Music and other electives.

Of major concern is facility space. Right now, there would be no space to accommodate these classes. It would require an 8-period day and the possibility of offering high school credits in 8th grade.

Another concern is the definition of rigor. The state views rigor as “more work”. The Milford Public Schools Instructional Plan views rigor as “in depth drilling of curriculum and “readiness to learn”. While the plan does promote the teaching of “21st Century” skills, it uses a “19th Century” curriculum. The MPS Instructional Plan is based on an integrated curriculum and is in line with the 19th century.

Dr. Polansky told the board, while he opposes the way NCLB was implemented; it did give us the opportunity to look at ourselves. The High School Reform is something that was invented in 1954. Things have changed significantly and so have the needs of educating.

The board added the following talking points for the upcoming Legislative Breakfast with Speaker Amann:

- Instructional Plan
- Extra-curricular (the Renaissance child)
- Co-curricular (elections)
- RIGOR
- Teacher Voice Needed
- Cost/Resources – more unfunded mandates
- Spaces & facilities
- Cost for teachers
- Invite Commissioner for a regional discussion to Milford
- May impact good schools negatively

Mr. Amendola suggested an invitation be extended to the Commissioner to visit Milford. The work should begin at the elementary level and roll up from there.

In closure, the board agreed with administration. They have many concerns about the impact High School Reform would have on Milford and local districts.

Public Comment

C. Berni – 96 Centennial Drive – She is not comfortable with the High School Reform Proposal. It is all about meeting the needs of the businesses. Therefore, they should pay for the unfunded mandates.

S. Glennon – 99 Carlson Drive – She also attended a meeting in January with Dr. McQuillan (Commissioner Forum). She too is not impressed. They did not hide

the fact that the initiative is mostly driven by businesses. She believes that if the reform is approved as is, we will lose a lot of creativity. She also noted the Connecticut PTA was not brought in to assist with the planning.

Board Comment

Mrs. Rohrig addressed an article that was posted in the Connecticut Post relative to Dr. Polansky's salary. She said the article was incorrect and she can provide a salary comparison sheet to anyone interested.

Mrs. Staneski congratulated Mr. Jay Rowe for his wonderful concert.

Chairman Hourigan asked for a motion to adjourn.

Being no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Mrs. Stanford and seconded by Mrs. Rohrig. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Greta Stanford
Majority Leader

Recorded by:

Pam Griffin