

# Milford Board of Education

## Meeting Minutes

### Regular Business Meeting

#### May 11, 2009

#### Board members present:

David Amendola  
Tracy Casey  
David Hourigan, Board Chair  
Cindy Kopazna  
Jim Quish  
Jim Santa Barbara  
Pamela Staneski  
Greta Stanford, Majority Leader  
David Steinlauf

#### Administrators present:

Harvey Polansky, Superintendent  
Philip Russell, Deputy Superintendent  
Wendy Kopazna, Dir. of Human Resources  
Susan Kelleher, Dir. of Pupil Personnel Services

#### Absent Board Members

Joanne Rohrig, Minority Leader

## I. CALL TO ORDER

The Milford Board of Education held its regular business meeting on Monday, May 11, 2009 in the Board of Education Meeting Room in the Parsons Complex. Board Chair David Hourigan called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance immediately following.

## II. STUDENT/STAFF RECOGNITION

Dr. Harvey Polansky and Board Chair David Hourigan started the meeting with recognition of several students and staff members for their recent good work. Recognitions included:

### John F. Kennedy School

The following students participated in a contest conducted through Creative Communications, an organization that publishes a children's poetry anthology every year. Ms. Bonnie Feuer, a paraprofessional at JFK has sponsored this contest for the last four years. This year, Ms. Feuer worked with fifth graders who were interested in writing poems. Nine poems were submitted and five were chosen for the publication. Dr. Polansky thanked Ms. Feuer for her guidance and encouragement.

Jennifer Charney	JFK, 5 <sup>th</sup> grade
Vanessa Cuevas	JFK, 5 <sup>th</sup> grade
Cara Kaminski	JFK, 5 <sup>th</sup> grade
Kristine LaBanca	JFK, 5 <sup>th</sup> grade
Nadia Watt	JFK, 5 <sup>th</sup> grade
Bonnie Feuer	JFK, paraprofessional

### Harborside Science Olympiad Team

Congratulations were offered to the Harborside Science Olympiad Team for placing 8<sup>th</sup> overall in a competition that involved almost 15,000 schools nationwide. The teams competed in a variety of science events including Amphibians and Reptiles, Disease Detective, Food Science and Oceanography to name a few. Several team members won medals in their individual events, as well.

Daniel Ourfalian	Harborside, 8 <sup>th</sup> grade	1 <sup>st</sup> Place: Disease Detective
Liam Rice	Harborside, 8 <sup>th</sup> grade	1 <sup>st</sup> Place: Environmental Chemistry
Alexa Kovalakas	Harborside, 8 <sup>th</sup> grade	1 <sup>st</sup> Place: Environmental Chemistry
Thomas Astram	Harborside, 7 <sup>th</sup> grade	3 <sup>rd</sup> Place: Amphibians and Reptiles
Dory Holmes	Coach/Science Teacher	

Julie Pelczar

Coach/Science Teacher

**West Shore Middle School**

The Connecticut Science Fair was held March 10-14<sup>th</sup> at Quinnipiac University in Hamden, CT. Students participated by making a variety of science projects. These projects were put through the test and then received honors placement at the fair. While all students were outstanding with their projects, Elizabeth Gregorio was also selected as a finalist in the Environmental Science category and awarded junior finalist for the Audubon Connecticut and Arch Chemicals Environmental Award. She was also the recipient of the Stanley Recognition Award and received a \$100 gift certificate. The following students received honors for the innovative science projects:

Brooke Bonetti	West Shore, 6 <sup>th</sup> grade	3 <sup>rd</sup> Honors: Solar Power
Josh Paton		
Soumya Kundu	West Shore, 6 <sup>th</sup> grade	3 <sup>rd</sup> Honors: The Changing Color of Leaves
Laura Knoedler	West Shore, 6 <sup>th</sup> grade	2 <sup>nd</sup> Honors: Blowing in the Wind
Elizabeth Gregorio	West Shore, 6 <sup>th</sup> grade	2 <sup>nd</sup> Honors: Water and Architecture
Dr. Mary Ellen Coloski	Science Teacher	
Diana Randall	Science Teacher	
Theresa Radziewicz	Science Teacher	
Debra Bowler	Science Teacher	

**III. CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES**

- a) Greta Stanford made a motion to accept the March 30, 2009 policy workshop as approved. David Amendola seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- b) Greta Stanford made a motion to accept the April 6, 2009 meeting minutes as approved. David Amendola seconded. Mrs. Rohrig seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- c) Greta Stanford made a motion to accept the April 27, 2009 meeting minutes as approved. David Amendola seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Cathy Berni – 96 Centennial Drive

Mrs. Berni said that she has been approached by many parents asking questions about the Middle School presentation. There is a lot of confusion in the community. She asked how parent notification is being handled. Mr. Cummings said the program changes are being communicated through orientation meetings, school newsletters and PTA groups.

**V. CHAIR’S REPORT**

Board Chair David Hourigan called for the Liaison Reports. Mr. SantaBarbara shared his liaison report with the board.

Chairman Hourigan reminded the board of the upcoming events, graduations and closing ceremonies. Board members wishing to attend any of these events should notify Mrs. Griffin. He then read a letter he had sent to the Chairman of the Board of Aldermen (on file).

**VI. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

**1. Student Reports.**

Dan Worroll and Nichole Geoffrion reported on the latest activity and upcoming events occurring at Joseph A. Foran High School. William Bradford presented the report for Jonathan Law High School. Both reports are on file.

## **2. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Polansky reported no date has been set for the Board of Alderman to vote on the Board of Education Operations budget.

Dr. Polansky then updated the board on how the district has been monitoring H1N1 virus. He provided a thorough list of action the district has taken to keep the public informed if the latest information available. For examples, custodians have increased the cleaning of the common areas, students with sick siblings have been asked to stay home and attendance has been monitored. He reported the recommendation from the State Department of Health is to keep the school district open unless there is an outbreak of the swine flu. He assured the board administration has been working very closely with the Department of Health and that Dr. McBride and Mrs. Cagginello have done an outstanding job of coordinating and communicating information. He reiterated the district is in very good shape should a crisis occur.

Dr. Polansky concluded his report by recommending the board to attend an athletic event.

## **3. Instructional Report**

### **a) Early dismissal extended to all grade levels**

Mr. Cummings reported the school calendar would change to extend the early dismissal days to all grade levels instead of just the high school level. This change will allow teachers to collaborate with peers, as warranted under Response to Intervention (RTI). The change will also give "subject area content" teachers of all levels the opportunity to meet as a team. This will also assist in the revision of the districts' curriculum to gain a true understanding of the Ends Policies. Dr. Polansky added this change is a common practice across the state. Some districts close schools for one day a month to give the teachers the needed time to collaborate.

Mrs. Staneski asked if the increased meeting time could be measured and reported out to the public. Is it better to do this in small doses or would it be better to take a full day. Dr. Polansky told her the meeting time would be measured by the curriculum and success of the RTI. The district has found that what is happening at the high schools is very powerful and has proved to be successful. In conclusion, he said the program will need to be revisited, and monitored.

Mr. SantaBarbara asked if the outcomes will be made public. He further stated concerned with the trade off time of instructional time for meeting time. Will the schools be directed to develop their own outcomes of the meetings? Mr. Cummings told him the meeting time will be transparent and a calendar of meetings and the expected outcomes will be made public for all. He also asked if the board be notified in advance of the meetings. Mike told him the expectations of all outcomes will be published.

Mr. Quish asked if there is a requirement that dictates the district to change its' current schedule for meeting schedule. Dr. Polansky told him the district as a whole is in need of this change. The unions are also in agreement of the change. But Mr. Quish said he supports communication and integrated teaching through all levels. However, there are other ways to collaborate as a team i.e. Webinars and Internet. He asked if the district could create some event that could teach them community service or computers for one half a day to get the students to learn. A small group of staff would be needed to oversee this. Dr. Polansky told him the proposal is to send the children home. There would be too much distraction and only part of the staff would be able to participate. The intent is to have 100% participation.

Mr. Cummings hopes to share an intranet based resource program for the teachers at the October Board meeting.

The board discussed the financial impact to many families given these economic times and the hardship it would cause for families needing to arrange for coverage for the 10 additional days (elementary). Dr. Polansky told the board the students receive well over the 900 mandated hours of instruction. This time gives the teachers 25 meaningful hours to collaborate. After some discussion, the board asked Dr. Polansky to notify the YMCA and the Milford Recreation Department of the early dismissal days hoping they may be able to accommodate families in need of coverage.

Mr. Amendola suggested the board vote on this change because the board voted on the original calendar.

Mr. Hourigan asked for clarification on the term of this program. Dr. Polansky said it would be discussed annually and the board would then choose the approve it.

#### 4. Operational Report

##### a) Personnel Report

Mrs. Wendy Kopazna, Director of Human Resources, presented the report for March. She reported recruiting is a top priority. Additionally, interviews are being conducted for the principal of Harborside Middle School.

Mr. SantaBarbara asked for clarification of the technology teachers and was told there were three new positions currently. There are four openings. One, for each middle school and one to float.

Mrs. Staneski asked if volunteer coaches have to reapply every year and was told yes. Head coaches do not have to reapply. However, management owns the right to offer them the position year after year.

##### b) Budget Report for March

Mr. Russell presented the Budget Performance Report for April, as well as the Cash Disbursements Report. He noted that the negative accounts will either be offset by the excess cost grant or by the rebates from the government or transfers.

Mrs. Staneski asked for an update on the stimulus money. SFSF funds, about 3.4 million to the City of Milford, has been held up because originally the Governor wanted to use the money to offset ECS. The intent of the law is that the money goes directly to the local education agency. The State has not applied for those funds because they need to account for the funds and where is the money the Governor was to use for those funds. Dr. Polansky will continue to advocate for the money.

Reverse auction bidding allows companies to bid online and the companies can see each other's bids. The companies then compete to get the best bid in to sell their products. A law was passed earlier in the year to allow this. Some companies are offering no cost software programs to enable districts to participate. It is another tool for bidding.

Mrs. Kopazna asked where the money would come from for building projects and was told the retirement account. Less than ten retirements will allow administration to transfer funds to other accounts. Dr. Polansky stated that no funds will be transferred until all salary commitments have been made.

#### VII. CONSENT AGENDA

Greta Stanford made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented. David Amendola seconded. The Consent agenda included:

- Voucher list disbursements, March 2009
- Certified Resolution authorizing Mr. Russell to execute rental agreement with Housatonic Community College.
- Budget Transfers, \$400,000 from series 1130 to series 3306 (\$50,000), 4304 (\$300,000) and 7310 (\$50,000).

Motion passed unanimously.

#### VIII. ACTION ITEMS

**Unfinished Business.** The board chair then asked for a motion to approve the revision made to GP12 as approved.

- a) Greta Stanford made a motion to accept the revision to GP12 as approved. David Amendola seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**New Business.** Greta Stanford made a motion to add the Early Release Day Proposal under New Business. David Amendola seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Greta Stanford then made a motion to approve the revision to the 2009-10 academic calendar to include the K8 early release day schedule approved. David Amendola seconded.

Jim Quish wants administration to talk to the YMCA and the Park and Recreation department about afterschool coverage.

Pam Staneski would like administration to ensure that the proper communication is done notifying the community of the 10 early release days. Dr. Polansky will send a ConnectEd message.

Tracy Casey would like a report of the early dismissal day program before the board is to vote on the next academic calendar.

Dr. Polansky will report out on the professional development time when discussing the 2010-11 calendar.

The motion passed unanimously.

## **IX. BOARD COMMENT**

Mrs. Kopazna asked Mr. Hourigan if Aldermen Blake had responded to his letter. Mr. Hourigan told her that Aldermen Blake responded that it is the Mayor's authority to send it forward.

Mr. Steinlauf asked what would be impacted immediately if the projects did not get approved. Dr. Polansky told him the high school projects would be heavily impacted. The high school projects are a priority. It is a sound fiscal environment to put money into the projects.

David Amendola asked the chair to send a letter to the City Attorney seeking clarification of bonding authority.

Tracy Casey would like to invite the Mayor to talk to the board about bonding.

## **X. ADJOURN**

David Amendola made a motion to adjourn. Tracy Casey seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.