

Milford Board of Education

Meeting Minutes

Board Retreat

June 19, 2009

Board members present:

Tracy Casey
David Hourigan, Board Chair
Joanne Rohrig, Minority Leader
Greta Stanford, Majority Leader (left at 7:10)
David Steinlauf

Administrators present:

Harvey Polansky, Superintendent
Philip Russell, Deputy Superintendent
Michael Cummings, Assistant Superintendent
Wendy Kopazna, Dir. of Human Resources

Absent:

David Amendola
Cindy Kopazna
Jim Quish
Jim Santa Barbara
Pam Staneski

Consultant

Dennis Cheesebrow, TeamsWorks International

The Milford Board of Education held its board retreat on Friday, June 19, 2009 in the Board of Education Meeting Room in the Parsons Complex. Board Chair David Hourigan called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

The minutes below summarize the content reviewed at the retreat.

Milford Public Schools has partnered with TeamWorks International Inc. of White Bear Lake, Minnesota since 2008 to learn, develop and implement the Education Leadership System™ (ELS) to “align the adults for student learning and development”.

ELS guides the development of systems, structures, relationships, policies and practices for the pursuit of:

- Excellence in Governance by the Board of Education
- Excellence in Management by the Superintendent and Administrators
- Excellence in Consultation by staff, parents and public

To-date, Milford Public Schools has engaged in developing some of the key elements of ELS:

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|--|----------------------------|
| A. Strategic Roadmap | Excellence in Governance |
| B. Vision Scorecards | Excellence in Management |
| C. School Improvement based on School Scorecards | Excellence in Consultation |
| D. Monitoring Reports | Excellence in Management |

For the June, 2009 Board of Education Retreat, the key agenda points and outcomes were as follows:

1. The Board of Education, Superintendent and District Directors were provided an update and expanded Education Leadership System Guidebook. Key points highlighted during the Guidebook overview were:
 - a. Excellence in Governance Pages 1 – 17
 - i. Five (5) primary responsibilities of the Board Page 3
 - ii. Forces pushing against excellence in all three authorities Page 4
 - iii. Tools for excellence for all three authorities Page 6
 - iv. Alignment and Accountability system and elements Pages 7 – 8
 - v. Popular myths of serving on School Board Page 9
 - vi. The Governance – Management Continuum Page 10

Notes: Out of this overview and discussion emerged some key notes in moving forward:

- A. The Board would benefit from using the Four Practices more consistently and competently, especially Practices # 2 and 3
- B. Practices # 1 and 2 can be effectively introduced by both Board members and Superintendent during meetings
- C. Any group of adults can try to operate outside of their authority by politic and personality, and neither are legitimate for the other adults to stand aside or not challenge such choices

b. Excellence in Management

Pages 18 - 26

c. Excellence in Consultation

Pages 27 – 34

- 2. The Board of Education used two recent and relevant issues facing the District to better understand how excellence in governance, management and consultation play out and can improve the performance of the district
 - a. Budget Reduction Process
 - i. The Decision Making and the Guiding Change FrameWorks were reviewed as an alternative process to past practices
See Guidebook pages 27 - 34
 - ii. The key contributions of the Board in large scale and public decision making are
 - 1. Use the Guiding Change FrameWork to articulate the “unified voice” of the Board with regards to the “why”, the “what” and the “not how” or in the FrameWork the Context, the Results and the Unacceptable Means
 - 2. Observe and listen, but not engage in the public process of Phase A and B
 - 3. Use the Guiding Change document to negotiate and refine the direction as new ideas, challenges and questions emerge from Phase A and B work
 - 4. Act as a Board in Phase C: Choice making and making the final decisions
 - 5. Once the budget is set, the academic program and organizational structure to implement the budget and achieve the Vision in the Strategic Roadmap and Level 5 metrics in the Scorecards is the work of the Superintendent
Following the Retreat, the DRAFT Guiding Change Document was provided by the Superintendent as a starting point (standard practice in most Districts)

Milford Public Schools 2009 – 2010 Budget Reduction Process		
Current Context and Reality	Non-Negotiable Items	Results
The following realities necessitate new budget options for 2009-10	In preparing the option for the 2009-10 budget, we will not . . .	The budget options presented will provide us with . . .
1. Safety, security and health standards will be maintained and supported 2. Salaries will increase based on collective bargaining agreements 3. Existing programs and services will be maintained or adjusted as the educational needs of students change 4. Overall staffing levels will be adjusted based on enrollment, facility, or programming considerations 5. Benefit costs will be maintained in accordance with labor contracts 6. Purchased services and supply accounts will be adjusted for enrollment changes, and facility needs 7. State and Federal financial support will not keep pace with increased legislative mandates 8. There will be efficient and effective use of space and facilities district-wide	1. Violate any laws, Board policies, or labor contracts 2. Close a school building 3. Change grade configurations 4. Arbitrarily change district lines 5. Make arbitrary, across-the-board reductions 6. Hold any program, service or employee group above consideration for budget reductions 7. Eliminate programs that have proven positive effects on teaching and learning 8. Reduce budget components that specifically address health or safety	1. Continued focus and support of the No Child Left Behind national mandate (NCLB) 2. The proper training for our staff to implement the Response to Intervention (RTI) mandate 3. Assure educational results in alignments with District Strategic Roadmap 4. Adequate assessments to monitor student progress 5. The resources necessary to allow the district to meet learning expectations defined in our Academic Improvement Plans (AIP) 6. Updated instructional materials for teachers and students as required through the curriculum renewal cycle 7. Adequate funding for maintaining a safe and healthy environment for students and staff

- 9. The Capital Improvement Plan will not keep pace with aging facility needs
- 10. Continuity of community support

This Guiding Change DRAFT document is an example and a very good start and follows the process guidelines very well. Some consideration and thought might be given to:

- If there are known or predictable issues, concerns, ideas or option elements which will significantly affect the decision making process, then the Board and Superintendent would want to discuss how to address those issues upfront through the Guiding Change document.
 - The DRAFT typically goes to the Board for a work session (1 hour) for discussion, refinement and completion. The Board would vote to approve such a document in advance of the Decision making process beginning
 - A key to success is the design of the participants and the process of Phases A and B of the Decision Making process. Typically, the Choice makers (Board, Superintendent and Business Director) meet to refine a DRAFT proposal developed by the Superintendent and Cabinet
- b. Hiring of Principals
- i. The discussion regarding the Board involvement in the hiring of principals was both short and yet can serve as a profound learning for the Board and Administration
 - ii. The District policies delegate virtually all management responsibility and authority to the Superintendent, especially in the area of hiring of employees. A review of the policies by those in attendance confirmed this point. Thus, since the authority and responsibility has been delegated, there is no direct role for the Board or for any of the members to insert oneself into the identified and documented process of hiring a principal
 - iii. A more important point of learning is to do so by a Board member or Board without change in policy is a violation of the District policies and neither the Board nor the Superintendent can participate, support or look away from such activities. For some Board members, there is a myth that their personal desire to be involved or to influence management activities and decisions is an acceptable alternative to policy. It is not.
- c. Attendance at the Board Retreat
- i. It was noted by the attendees that the absence of Board members of a retreat evening scheduled in January, 2009 is disappointing and a pattern to be changed.
 - ii. Several ideas were discussed which will be considered by the Board to maximize attendance and shared learning and development as a requirement of Board service.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne Rohrig
Minority Leader

Recorded by:

Dennis Cheesebrow
TeamWorks Intl