

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy. -- Martin Luther King, Jr.

Across the Board



Reporting on
the BOE Meeting of
February 11, 2008

The Milford Board of Education

David Hourigan, Chair
Greta Stanford, Maj. Leader
Joanne Rohrig, Min. Leader
David Amendola
Tracy Casey
Cindy Kopazna
Jim Quish
James Santa Barbara
Pamela Staneski
David Steinlauf

Upcoming Dates

Feb. 18-22: Winter vacation

February 25: Board of Ed. Committee of the Whole, @ Parsons, 7:00 p.m.

March 4: Board of Ed. presents the recommended 2008-09 Budget to the Board of Finance; Parsons -- Conf. Room B, 7:00 p.m.

March 10: Board of Ed. Regular Business Meeting; Parsons, 7:00 p.m.

Published through a partnership of the Milford Board of Education and the Communications Office of the Milford Public School system.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Board Chair **David Hourigan** began by announcing **Dr. Harvey Polansky** will be speaking on the topic of *No Child Left Behind (NCLB): Positives, Obstacles, and Solutions* as part of a panel discussion to be held on March 19 at UCONN- Neag School of Education.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- ◆ **Dr. Harvey Polansky** introduced the concept of standardized classroom walk-throughs to all in attendance. In September, he and **Asst. Supt. Michael Cummings** began to collect data using this approach and synthesized the information in December. He asked Mr. Cummings to present the district's findings at this meeting.

INSTRUCTIONAL REPORT

- ◆ **Walk-Throughs: What they are, How they work**
Mr. Cummings used a MS Powerpoint presentation to illustrate the information on walk-throughs. Generally, a walk-through is conducted by a building principal who visits a classroom for a short time frame (~ 4 - 5 minutes). The visit enables the administrator to get a snapshot view of the activity going on in the classroom, relative to curriculum, engagement, and instructional leadership.

Mr. Cummings was quick to mention this is not a time to observe or evaluate a teacher in the classroom. Rather, it is a practice that helps administrators gauge consistency and conformity within the classroom and throughout the grade level. Additionally, it will highlight strengths in practice across the district. Strengths will be noted and used as a basis for future professional development training.

Mr. Cummings, Dr. Polansky and other members of the administrative team have conducted over 2,000 walk-throughs since September and are using their experiences to help train the current building administrators. Work on developing this practice will continue.

OPERATIONS REPORT

◆ Personnel Report

Director of Human Resources Wendy Kopazna presented the Personnel report for the month. There were 15 open positions at the time of the meeting. Mrs. Kopazna also noted that since the January board meeting, nine additional substitute teachers had been hired to help ease the situation caused by unfilled substitute teacher opportunities.

Mrs. Kopazna also reported her team is getting ready for the upcoming hiring season and will be participating in the Fairfield County Educator Recruitment Fair on March 29. The district has participated in this fair for the past two years with dozens of staff and administrators from our schools assisting. While there, the group has traditionally met and screened more than 1,000 candidates. Our district has been able to find several new teachers through this resource.

Last but not least, the Benefits team has also begun to conduct retirement workshops for those staff members who are preparing to retire in the coming year.

◆ January Budget Report

Mr. Russell presented the financial reports for January. Board members asked questions about a handful of line items, including *Unemployment Compensation, Other Pupil Personnel Services, Gasoline Buses, Building Rental, and Lease/Purchase* line items. **Mr. Russell** provided additional information on each topic to the Board.

◆ Enumeration Cards: Nearly 58% Received

Mr. Russell reported 57.5% of the cards sent out for the enumeration had been received to date. Discussions will now take place to determine next steps. A 70-75% rate of return or higher is held as an acceptable benchmark in order to make valid assumptions

(please see pg. 2 for more!)

connections

There is a wealth of information contained on the Milford Board of Education Website. Go to www.milforded.org and check out the following items:

Milford Public Schools Event Calendar

Want to know what's going on in our schools? Click on the **About our District** tab, then click on **School District Calendar**. ALL of the events entered throughout the district are listed there. If you happen to plan events for other organizations, this tool may be extremely helpful!

Bridges to the Board

Answers are provided within 24 hours to questions asked by members of the public during BOE meetings. Check it out!

BOE Meeting Minutes

You don't have to visit the City Clerk's office to get copies of minutes -- they are right on the web!

MGAT -- Channel 79

If you live in Milford and want to know what's going on during any of the city's public meetings, tune in to Channel 79 ~ the Milford Government Access Television channel. Meetings are aired in their entirety and you can attend any time -- even in your jammies!

on student densities in various areas of Milford. Mr. Russell will continue to report on this issue at future board meetings.

◆ Food Service Financial Report

Milford Public Schools Foodservice Director Eileen

Faustich delivered her semi-annual program update, noting her team has served more than 318,780 meals from the beginning of school through December 2007. The foodservice division is a self-sustaining, \$2.5 million enterprise. Mrs. Faustich then explained the various line items on the financial report and answered questions asked by board members.

◆ Healthy Food and Beverage Presentation

Mrs. Faustich then gave a presentation relating to the Healthy Food and Beverage initiative, sponsored by the State of Connecticut. The program offers school district foodservice providers a rebate, (in the form of 10¢ per meal served) for those districts that serve only healthy foods as defined by the state. In Milford, this would equate to approximately \$67,000 that would go back to the Milford Schools Foodservice division.

In order to qualify for the rebate, both the foodservice division *and* the members of the school community (students, PTA/O chapters, staff, and other groups in the schools), must abide by a Healthy Food and Beverage Policy (and as dictated by the state).

Mrs. Faustich explained that her organization is already approximately 95% compliant with the state requirements. Only a few non-conforming items would need to be removed from the à la carte selections in order to completely comply, which could be easily accomplished.

The troublesome part of the policy involves student groups and their fundraising endeavors. Specifically, the program prohibits students from selling or purchasing targeted "bad" food items, (such as candy bars, cupcakes, chips, lollipops, etc.) *during the school day*. This would prohibit schools from conducting bake sales, candy sales, and sales of other targeted food items that are sold and/or consumed *during the school day*.

While the ban on the sale of targeted items would cause some minor concern at the elementary and middle school levels (bake sales would be prohibited), it would clearly cause havoc at the

high school level. Most of the student activity groups at the high school level regularly sell items that would be prohibited by the new policy, (candy sales, in particular). Following Mrs. Faustich's explanation, there was much discussion among the board on the issue at hand. The board needs to vote on their participation in this program annually, as required per the state. Dr. Polansky urged the board to vote on this within the next two months in order to give all school groups (ex: PTA/O groups, Booster clubs, etc.) an adequate amount of time to plan and proceed with their fundraising efforts for the 08-09 year.

◆ Hockey Athletic Funding Audit

Mr. Russell delivered a report about the audit he completed on the financial books of the Milford Indians Hockey Club. This club is a combined high school level hockey team represented by students from Jonathan Law, Joseph A. Foran, and Platt Tech. The team is partially funded by the Board of Education and the remaining (and significant) balance funded by parent contributions and other fundraisers conducted throughout the season. Mr. Russell commended parent (and club bookkeeper) **Arlene Willis** on a job well done.

CONSENT AGENDA

The Board approved the following items:

- Voucher disbursements, January 2008
- Authorization for the J.A. Foran Wrestling Team to attend the Class M State Championships in Willimantic, CT on Feb. 15-16.
- Budget Transfer: \$182,525 transferred from Line 1111 (Certified Teachers Salaries) to Lines 5107 (Gasoline/Buses); 7391 (Lease/Purchase); and 3235 (Other Pupil Personnel Services).

NEW BUSINESS

Academic Calendar. The academic calendar for the 2008-09 year was released and approved. The first day of school for students will be Tuesday, Sept. 2 (the day after Labor Day).

Redistricting. The decision was made to continue sending kindergarten students from the Mathewson area to Pumpkin Delight for another year.

NEXT MEETING

The next Board of Education meeting is scheduled for March 10 (at Parsons), beginning at 7:00 p.m. All are welcome.