

Now is the time. Needs are great, but your possibilities are greater. - Bill Blackman



Across the Board

Reporting on
the BOE Meeting of
March 10, 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

March 21: Schools will be closed in honor of Good Friday.

March 24: Board of Ed. Committee of the Whole, @ Parsons, 7:00 p.m.

March 25: Parent-Teacher conferences for High School Only; high school students - early dismissal

March 31: No classes for students; Professional development for staff

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CHAIR'S REPORT

Board Chair **David Hourigan** began by asking the board members to present their liaison reports for the various agencies and city groups with which they are associated. Board member **Jim Santa Barbara** reported on PTA Council and ACES news. Board member **Cindy Kopazna** presented an overview of activity with the Permanent School Building Committee. Board member **Pamela Staneski** spoke about plans for the upcoming Board Member School Lunch Visits that would be organized over the next several weeks. Board members **Greta Stanford** and **Tracy Casey** reported on the most recent Board of Aldermen meeting, as well as Planning and Zoning.

Chair Hourigan then reminded everyone about the conference on the No Child Left Behind to be held on 3/19 at UCONN. **Dr. Harvey Polansky** is slated to be a presenter. **Mr. Hourigan** also reminded everyone that the CABE Day on the Hill would take place on March 12 and urged everyone to attend.

In other news to report, **Mr. Hourigan** confirmed that the \$35,000 grant from the state (earmarked for the Trumbull Voag Program) had been received, as well as a commitment for the same for next year.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

◆ Junior Achievement Presentation

Dr. Harvey Polansky introduced **Mr. Joseph Meade**, District Manager for the Junior Achievement program. Mr. Meade gave a short overview of the work Junior Achievement has accomplished in the Milford Public Schools over the past few years. The program is offered free to all public and parochial students through the benevolence and charitable work of many agencies, including Milford's Promise, Milford Bank, Speaker James Amann, and many more.

On another issue, **Mr. Meade** also mentioned he was recently named Vice President of Milford's Promise and was pleased to announce a special event for teachers called the *Educators Business After Hours Expo*

that would be conducted, thanks to the Chamber of Commerce. All board members were invited to attend, as well.

INSTRUCTIONAL REPORT

◆ Instructional Plan/Strategic Road Map

Dr. Polansky stated that review of the instructional plan, for any public school district, is always ongoing. New methods, new technology, and the ever-changing global marketplace requires school systems to continually re-examine their work plan. He further said that while a solid foundation had been put in place prior to his joining the district, he had been working with administration and staff over the past year to continue to bring the plan forward. He then asked **Assistant Superintendent Michael Cummings** to present the newest release of the Instructional Plan and Strategic Road Map.

Mr. Cummings then brought attendees through a Power Point presentation, explaining the details of the proposed 2008-09 Instructional Plan.

OPERATIONS REPORT

◆ Personnel Report

Director of Human Resources Wendy Kopazna presented the Personnel report for the month. There were 22 open positions at the time of the meeting. Mrs. Kopazna also noted that since the February board meeting, six additional substitute teachers had been hired, which hopefully would alleviate some of the challenges the district had been facing in filling requests for substitutes.

The report also noted six stipend appointments had been granted and 14 positions had been filled, (various). Five individuals had also announced their plans to resign or retire from the district this year.

◆ February Budget Report

Mr. Russell presented the financial reports for February. Board members asked questions about a handful of line items, including

(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!

1125-Paraprofessionals, 1130-Retirements, 2005-Unemployment Compensation, 2007-Paraprofessional Pension, and 8111-Professional Development. **Mr. Russell** provided additional information on each topic to the Board.

◆ Enumeration Cards: Telephone calls next

Mr. Russell reported that he expects the next wave of information-gathering to be conducted via telephone. While the logistics are still not clear, he mentioned that the calls will likely be made out of the Business Office in Parsons. He will provide details next month.

◆ BusRadio Installed; Working Well

Mr. Russell presented some background information about a new program called BusRadio. This is a program that plays continuous music on our school buses while they are in transit. The equipment that was installed on each Durham bus servicing our students was provided to the district free of charge. A major benefit to this program is the fact that the equipment on each bus also houses a GPS locator system. The BusRadio units were installed during the February break and within the first week upon students' return to school, our drivers have reported the response has been incredibly positive.

The music that is played in the bus comes in 60-minute modules containing pre-recorded music content. Of that time, 52 minutes are music, four are pre-recorded public service announcements (tips for being safe, Just say no, etc.) -- and four are advertisements. The PSA announcements and the ads are sprinkled throughout the hour long program of songs.

There are three different levels of programming used by the district -- one for elementary students, one for middle school kids and one for high schoolers. Content differs from level to level in order to reflect the musical tastes and preferences of each age group, but the number of minutes associated with each type of content (mentioned earlier) are the same -- :52, :04 and :04. A new program of content is uploaded (remotely) at the end of each business day, so students hear a whole new program every time they board the bus.

Neil Martino, Durham School Services Manager (Milford) was in the audience and told Board members that during the very first week, the drivers told him the response had been positive.

Drivers reported that the kids were calmer and the environment on the bus was much quieter.

He further reported that a Content Committee reviews and approves all of the content on the modules. The Committee is comprised of educational professionals from across the country. Dr. Polansky stated that this program is a test at this point and they will monitor it closely over the next few months.

CONSENT AGENDA

The Board approved the following items:

1. Voucher disbursements, February 2008
2. Field trip request; JAF Journalism Class to Columbia Univ., 3/19-21, 2008.
3. Field trip request: JAF Band to the CMEA All-State Music Ensemble competition; 4/3-5.
4. Meadowside School Window Project acceptance as complete.
5. Textbook approval: (*Adventures in Food and Nutrition* and *The Visual Experience*).

OTHER BUSINESS

Healthy Foods. By a vote of 9-1, the Board of Education decided not to participate in the Healthy Foods Rebate program at this time, due to the various challenges it would present in the area of student fundraising. Board members asked Dr. Polansky to prepare additional information specific to school/student fundraising by the end of the school year.

NEXT MEETING

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

It should also be noted that the Board of Aldermen will be conducting a public hearing regarding the city and the education budgets on Wednesday, April 2 at City Hall. Any resident of Milford is welcome to speak. The public hearing begins at 7:00 p.m.