

“People who work together will win, whether it be against complex football defenses, or the problems of modern society.”
— Vince Lombardi 1913-1970

Across the Board



Reporting on the BOE Meeting of October 9, 2007

The Milford Board of Education

Cindy Kopazna, Chair
Pamela Staneski, Maj. Leader
David Amendola, Min. Leader
Michael Cavallaro
David Hourigan
Scott Marlow
Deborah Mead
Catherine Nihart
Joanne Rohrig
Dr. Mark Stapleton

Upcoming Dates

Nov. 6: No classes for students;
(Election Day; teachers report for
professional development)

Nov. 12: School closed;
(Veterans Day)

Nov. 13: Board of Ed Meeting,
7:00 p.m., Parsons (TUESDAY)

Nov. 13-15: Early dismissal
(elementary and middle only; parent
teacher conferences)

Nov. 21: Early dismissal
(beginning of Thanksgiving break)

Nov. 22-23: School closed;
(Thanksgiving break)

CHAIR'S REPORT

Mrs. Pamela Staneski served as Acting Board Chair for the October 9 meeting. Board Chair Cindy Kopazna was unable to attend due to a prior work commitment. Mrs. Staneski provided the following updates relating to board business.

The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, (CABE), will conduct its annual convention on November 16 and 17. Chair Kopazna and Superintendent Dr. Harvey Polansky will arrange for a group of board members to attend this CABE meeting.

Mrs. Staneski reported she had attended the Milford's Promise Red Wagon Fair that had taken place two weeks prior. She commended the group for a job well done, including the participation of the Milford Public Schools.

In closing, Mrs. Staneski reported that the Milford Education Funding Committee had met the week prior with Deputy Superintendent Philip Russell and State Representative Paul Davis. Discussion focused on the Educational Cost Sharing (ECS) formula. A public forum is being developed and expected to be held in November.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

◆ Trumbull Vocational Agriscience Program Report

Dr. Harvey Polansky began his report with a review of the events that had taken place over the past year relating to the Trumbull Vocational Agriscience program. He reported that Mark Stapleton (Connecticut State Dept. of Ed) concurred with Milford's interpretation of the post-June passage of educational law regarding vocational facility access. This interpretation calls for determining a three-year average of the total number of Milford students who had attended the Trumbull program and the Bridgeport Aquaculture program. The resulting average then becomes the total number of students Milford would be required to send to the district's supported vocational program(s). According to state law, school districts are only required to support **one** vocational agriculture or aquaculture program. In

Milford's case, the program supported by the district is the Bridgeport Aquaculture program. As a result, Milford is absolved from sending students to Trumbull and, instead, is allowed to send all of its vocational agriculture/aquaculture students to Bridgeport. Dr. Polansky reminded the board that the cost difference between the two schools is significant.

Dr. Polansky reported, however, Connecticut's Speaker of the House James Amann had indicated in recent newspaper articles that he was confident he could present Milford with a \$35,000 grant to pay for a number of students to attend Trumbull Vo-ag Program this year. Questions were raised from members of the Board as to how this would affect future long-term costs for the Trumbull Vo-ag program.

The members of the Board then voted to accept the \$35,000 grant from the State, should it come to fruition, and use the money to send 5 students to the Trumbull program. Discussion will continue on this topic during Milford Public Schools budget preparation for 2008-09.

◆ High School After-School Tutorial Program

Dr. Polansky presented an overview of an after-school program designed to increase the academic achievement of at-risk students in 9th grade. Students would be accepted to the program based on the following criteria:

- Recommended by the freshmen team faculty
- GPA below 2.0
- An F on either a progress report or report card

Basically, the program would consist of four labs, each dedicated to a specific content area: English, Social Studies, Science, and Mathematics. Each lab would be staffed by a content area teacher and a special ed teacher. Dr. Polansky confirmed that this was only an overview of the program and that additional information was needed, such as budget analysis, bus scheduling and other issues.

connections

There is a wealth of information contained on the Milford Board of Education Website. Go to www.milforded.org and the following helpful documents can be found there:

Milford Public Schools Event Calendar

Want to know what's going on in the Milford Public Schools? Go to the website and click on About our District. From there, click on School District Calendar and you will see ALL of the events entered throughout the district. 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 Board of Ed meetings. Check it out!

Board of Education Meeting Minutes

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

Across the Board

Past issues; these meeting recaps provide a quick overview of what's happening in education in Milford.

◆ **NCLB Report Points to Increasing Benchmarks and Upcoming Renewal of Legislation**

Dr. Polansky presented an overview of the NCLB Legislation and the impact it can have on school districts, nationwide.

In Connecticut, students in Grades 3-8 are assessed using the Connecticut Mastery Test. In Grade 10, student performance is assessed using the Connecticut Academic Performance Test.

Top-level state educational officials, as well as superintendents throughout Connecticut, are concerned about the high degree of difficulty on the Connecticut tests, when compared to tests used in other states across the country. There are discussions taking place at both the state and federal levels about using one common test for *all* states, in order to 'level the playing field' for assessment purposes (and, ultimately, for fairer access to educational funding).

◆ **Enrollment Report**

Dr. Polansky pointed to the 2007-08 Enrollment report that had been distributed in the meeting packets. Although enrollment is monitored all year long, the October 1 enrollment is important as it is the constant reporting date used from year to year with the state.

Paraprofessionals have been added to two classrooms where class size was a concern. Slight declines in enrollment were observed in 6th and in 9th grades, which Dr. Polansky mentioned is often a reflection of the economy.

OPERATIONS REPORT

Deputy Superintendent Philip Russell reported on operational activity for the month.

◆ **Personnel Activity in Good Shape**

Other than one position that is still vacant, all teaching positions have been filled, as reported by HR Director Wendy Kopazna. Work in the coming weeks within the department will focus on continued negotiations with the Milford Education Association (MEA), as well as the collection of preliminary information for the 2008-09 budget.

◆ **Enumeration Report**

Mr. Russell reported that 20,000 enumeration surveys had been distributed to households throughout the city and, thus far, his

office has received approximately 8,000 completed surveys back. Work will continue to encourage citizens to send back this vital information to our district.

CONSENT AGENDA

The MBOE approved the following consent agenda items.

a) Voucher list disbursements; b) Joseph A. Foran Mission Statement; c) a field trip request from the Joseph A. Foran Natural Helpers to Camp Hazen in Chester, Conn. from October 26-28.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular Board meeting is slated for November 13 at the Parsons Complex in the Board of Education Meeting Room, beginning at 7:00 p.m. All are welcome. [Please note this is a Tuesday meeting, due to the Veterans Day holiday.]