

MILLBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES

DATE: October 28, 2009

PRESENT: Ms. Brady-Pojani Chairperson, Mr. Corey, Mr. Borowski, Mrs. Vigneau, Mr. Bedard, Business Administrator, Mrs. Molnar, Director of Pupil Services, Mr. Rapose, Curriculum Director, Mrs. Swenson, High School Principal, Ms. Simanski, Shaw Elementary School Principal, Mrs. Frederick, Elmwood Street School Principal, and Mrs. Hitchcock, Superintendent

ABSENT: Mr. Clawson, Vice Chairperson

LOCATION: Shaw Elementary School Media Center

TIME: 7:00 pm

Tour of the Shaw Elementary School

Ms. Brady-Pojani began the tour of the Shaw Elementary School at 6:30 pm. Ms. Simanski, Principal, stated that the Media Center book cases had been painted by Mrs. Kim Bille, Media Clerk. Ms. Simanski pointed out the new PBIS mission statement signs hanging in the office and front hall way. She also stated that the D.R.E.A.M. pledge is recited everyday. She pointed out the interior doors were not handicapped accessible. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that the doors would be handicapped accessible by the end of the school year. Ms. Simanski stopped in a bathroom to show the School Committee members how great the new privacy stalls looked. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that the school looked very good and very clean and that the custodians should be commended. Ms. Simanski continued the tour to the cafeteria and the stage area. Mr. Bedard stated that the stage would be completed during school vacation as to not disturb the classrooms. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that the District was cited by the Department of Education because the stage was not in ADA compliance. Ms. Simanski stopped in the Classroom Imagine II classroom. Mr. Bedard stated that Mr. Martin did a great job on installing cabinets in this room. Ms. Simanski stated that there is a Woolie in each classroom. Ms. Brady-Pojani asked if there were any concerns and how supplies were. Ms. Simanski stated that supplies were fine and that she would like to see the interior of building painted and that some of the lockers be repaired. In addition, she would like additional SmartBoards.

Ms. Brady-Pojani began the meeting at 7:00 pm.

Ms. Brady-Pojani asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the October 14th meeting. Mr. Borowski had a correction on page 3 under New Business it stated that a suggestion was made that Mrs. Vigneau take his place to serve on the Charter Review Committee and that Mrs. Vigneau was already on the Committee, therefore they are looking for

another member to serve. Mr. Corey made a motion to accept the minutes from the October 14th meeting and Mr. Borowski seconded the motion. All approved (3-0). Mrs. Vigneau abstained as she was not present at the meeting.

Report of the Administration

MCAS Presentation

Mr. Rapose, Curriculum Coordinator, presented a report for the MCAS 2009 scores for Millbury Public Schools. Mr. Rapose stated that Millbury has two sub groups that continue to be a challenge: special education and low income. Forty students are required to have a subgroup. He also stated that they are working on the implementation of new initiatives, and also to incorporate some of the Corrective Actions statements. He stated that they are finding difficulties when the students transfer to the next building. He stated that Massachusetts has the highest standardized test. The same yard stick is not used to measure other states right now. He also stated that 54% of the school districts did not meet AYP and that last year 50% of the schools did not make AYP. The percentage has increased every year and that more and more schools will not make AYP in the future.

Mrs. Frederick, Principal of the Elmwood Street School, stated that Elmwood shares the responsibility of the MCAS results with Shaw and the High School. She also stated that data is being used in depth. They also have a "walk to read" block every day. The students begin English Language Arts with their homeroom teachers for 40 minutes and then the students are grouped according to their reading level and they walk to the teacher that is teaching there grade level. They meet every six weeks and move students around. They also have a parent informational MCAS Night. The kids come to the meetings with their parents and show them what they are doing in class. She also stated that they don't teach to the test but use vocabulary words that appear on the test.

Ms. Simanski, Principal at the Shaw Elementary School, stated that she was not here last year but the Shaw School has done a lot of work on the power standards and aligning the curriculum to the power standards. Ms. Simanski stated that she has been working with Mrs. Frederick on how to address the transitioning concern and will begin working with Mrs. Swenson. Ms. Simanski stated that the PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports) initiative goal is to make a difference in the environment which will encourage students to actively participate in learning and doing homework. Ms. Simanski stated that at the present time there is Title I in grade 4 only and is working with Mr. Rapose to expand it to grades 5 and 6 and after school tutoring.

Mrs. Swenson, Principal, Millbury Junior/Senior High School, stated that every junior/senior high school teacher has analyzed data from Data Warehouse. During the Professional Development Day they looked at where and when teaching certain standards were being taught. They found that some standards were taught later in the year after the test and some of the standards that the teachers found important the state didn't. They have made adjustments in their curriculum. She also stated that an intern from WPI comes in every Tuesday to work with teachers bringing students to the computer labs.

The math orbitals that were offered last year to the needs improvement or below students are now being offered twice as long. The Special Education sub group students are learning subject specific strategies focusing on their areas of concern. Mrs. Swenson also stated that 10th grade students must pass three subjects now, math, ELA and science. She also stated that the teachers found that more frequent short term assessments were better than waiting for an entire unit to be done. Mrs. Swenson stated that they are using Prentice Hall which bridges the gap between Everyday Math which is used in the elementary schools to traditional math which is used in the junior/senior high school.

A discussion took place regarding Everyday Math. It was stated that Everyday Math does not use traditional language. Some schools have dropped using Everyday Math and some schools are still using Everyday Math but are adding supplementary material. It is a spiraling curriculum. It touches on a subject and then revisits the subject at a later time. It was stated that adding supplemental material is a good combination of Everyday Math and traditional math. Everyday Math teaches concepts not skills and is available through grade six. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that the District may have to take another look at Everyday Math in the future but a decision was made to continue using the program due to the amount of money spent on the program (about five years ago) and we feel confident that adding supplemental material and under the leadership of Ms. Simanski the transition to the junior high will be smoother. Ms. Brady-Pojani asked what math program the schools receiving top scores are using and would Mrs. Hitchcock include it on a future agenda. Mr. Rapose stated that not one program will work. Mrs. Swenson stated that there are no problems with Prentice Hall and that it is the best program to coordinate with Everyday Math.

District Actions

Mrs. Hitchcock stated that it was clear to her that we have three strong leaders. She stated that they would continue to work on power standards and what students need to learn in order to move on to the next grade level. And if they are the right power standards and when do you teach them so that there is time for the test. This mapping process is an energetic goal for the year. Mrs. Hitchcock also stated that if parents had concerns or questions regarding their child's MCAS scores to get in touch with the child's principal and make an appointment.

Ms. Brady-Pojani stated that some results are great some not so great. She stated that she is concerned about the Everyday Math program but they would have to take a wait and see approach. Mr. Borowski stated that due to some small test participants the percentages might seem large.

Mrs. Hitchcock stated that she had sent an attendance letter home to parents to inform them of the importance of students being in school and that they need to be engaged in effective teaching and learning. Resource shows it effects academically as well.

PBIS Presentation

Ms. Simanski stated that it was a pleasure to come into a school using the PBIS initiative. She introduced the team, Mrs. Cathy Vangos, coach, Mrs. DesRosiers, Mrs. Pezanelli, Ms. Dufault, Mrs. Platts and Mrs. Lane. She also read aloud an essay written by a student about what D.R.E.A.M means to him.

Mrs. Vangos began the presentation by stating that PBIS stands for Positive Behavior Intervention System. She stated that this initiative was funded through a \$6,000 grant. The program focuses on the positive. The goal is to decrease discipline and spend more time on learning. We have a much happier, healthier environment at Shaw School this year. She stated that we have a mission statement and the D.R.E.A.M. pledge.

The team members explained about the Woolie and Woolie cards. They explained about the lesson plans and the assemblies that were held the first three days of school. Teaching staff, secretaries, custodians and bus drivers have all been involved with PBIS.

Mrs. Hitchcock stated that they were lucky to be chosen for this initiative and thanked Mrs. Molnar. She stated that Mrs. Karen Molnar, Director of Pupil Services wrote the grant and put the training together for the Shaw Elementary School and the Junior High.

Facility Use

Mrs. Hitchcock recommended that the School Committee vote positively for both groups requesting the use of the high school auditorium. Both groups have been told that custodial time is in addition to the usage fees. Ms. Brady-Pojani stated that the notation expectation should be on both requests. She asked for a motion with the correction to approve Miss Worcester County using the high school auditorium. Mr. Borowski made a motion to approve the request and Mrs. Vigneau seconded the request. All approved (4-0). Mr. Borowski made a motion to approve the use of the high school auditorium by Patty Morris Dance studio and Mrs. Vigneau seconded the motion. All approved (4-0).

Mrs. Hitchcock stated that a draft of the Capital Improvement list was included in their packets. She stated that this list was created by the principals and directors which covers the next three years. If money ever comes available we will have projects ready to go. Ms. Brady-Pojani asked that Mrs. Hitchcock place this item on the agenda for the next meeting after they have a chance to review the information.

Mrs. Hitchcock stated that the questions the students will ask during Student Government Day on November 6th are included in their packets. It was stated that the School Committee and students will meet in the high school media center at 9:00 am.

Budget

Mrs. Hitchcock stated that she had received an email from Mr. Michael O'Connor, from the Finance Committee asking for a timeline for this year budget. Ms. Brady-Pojani asked that it be put on next week's agenda.

Old Business

Mrs. Hitchcock stated that Mrs. Swenson has hired Michael Bonner a 2005 graduate of Millbury High School as the Cable Club Advisor. He has experience in technology and film. He will be up and running so that he may videotape the basketball games.

Mr. Bedard gave a brief report on the status of the facility repairs. The stage at Shaw should be completed during the holiday break. The cross arms and two poles have been completed at Windle Field and they expect to complete the project this week.

They are looking into having the auditorium ceiling painted. This item will be placed on the agenda for the next meeting. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that this project is included in the Capital Improvement list.

Windle Field Update

Mr. Borowski stated that they have an opportunity to enlist soldiers to complete the work at Windle Field. The soldiers can provide all the labor and equipment. The school district would need to purchase the supplies and materials. The soldiers would complete the work in the spring or summer of 2011. This is a 3.2 million dollar project. Mr. Bedard stated that he is looking into the costs of supplies and materials. It was stated that this is a great opportunity to complete this project. Mr. Borowski requested that the Windle Field Committee come before the School Committee in early December.

Mrs. Hitchcock suggested moving the November 18th meeting to Elmwood Street School. The Lion's Club speeches will be held the same night at the high School. The meeting will be posted to start at 7:00 pm.

New Business

Mrs. Hitchcock stated that the School Committee may want to eliminate number two on the proposed policy for the entrance age for kindergarten students. Mr. Borowski stated that he was opposed to eliminating number two and felt there should be some flexibility for a possible highly intelligent student or other extenuating circumstances. Ms. Brady-Pojani stated that she would like to eliminate number two and set exact guidelines. Mr. Corey agreed with Ms. Brady-Pojani. Ms. Brady-Pojani asked for a motion to eliminate number two for the third reading of the policy. Mr. Corey made a motion to eliminate number two and Ms. Brady-Pojani stepped down to second the motion. All approved (3-0) Mr. Borowski – opposed.

Mrs. Swenson stated that forty seniors have been awarded the John and Abigail Adams scholarship. This scholarship allows the students to attend any public college or university for free. She also stated that the students must be in the top 25% of their class and must maintain a 3.0 grade point average. Ms. Brady-Pojani asked Mrs. Hitchcock to send letters of congratulations from the School Committee to the students. She also stated that she would like to know how many students take advantage of this scholarship.

Ms. Brady-Pojani stated that she had received a letter from the Millbury Teachers Association looking for a timeline to start collective bargaining. Ms. Brady-Pojani stated that she would rather not undertake this until after the holidays and she asked Mrs. Hitchcock to see how Mr. Lyons felt about that. At the first meeting in January we will set a schedule.

Mrs. Hitchcock stated that Mr. Borowski has officially resigned from the Charter Review Committee and they are looking for another School Committee member to volunteer to serve on this committee. Mrs. Hitchcock also stated that if there is not a volunteer from the School Committee than the seat could be filled by a Millbury resident and she may have a name of someone if the Committee is interested.

Mrs. Hitchcock stated that Dr. Gordon Benson from LUK would like to present to the School Committee the results of the LUK survey on November 18th. These results will affect not only the School Department but the community as well.

Ms. Brady-Pojani stated there was no need to go into Executive Session.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by

Donna Lane
School Committee Clerk

Approved:



