

**Millbury School Committee Meeting  
REGULAR SESSION  
Minutes**

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MILLBURY, MASS

**Date:**           **October 23, 2013**

**Present:**       **Mrs. Nietupski, Chairperson; Mr. Borowski, Vice Chairperson;  
Mrs. Vigneau; Mr. Corey; Mr. Plante; Mrs. Hitchcock,  
Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Bedard, Business Manager**

**Time:**           **7:00 p.m.**

**Location:**     **Millbury Jr. /Sr. High School Media Center**

**Mrs. Nietupski called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.**

**1. Approval of Regular Session Meeting Minutes of 9/25/2013**

Mrs. Nietupski asked for any changes, additions or deletions to the Regular Session Minutes of September 25, 2013.

Mr. Corey made the motion to accept, seconded by Mr. Plante. All in favor (5-0).

**2. Student Advisory Report**

Senior Ryan Mercier, president of the National Honor Society, addressed the committee on behalf of the Student Advisory Council. He invited members to attend the National Honor Society's Induction Ceremony on Wednesday, November 6, 2013. The ceremony is being held earlier this year to accomplish more in the school year and provide participation in service opportunities. He noted the purpose of the council is to have student issues and requests heard by the school committee. He provided folders for the members outlining the approved bylaws and Massachusetts General Laws regarding the council.

Ryan, along with senior Andrew Borus, formed the council which currently has seven members. Millbury teacher, Mark Sutphen is the advisor for the council. Ryan stated they intend to present one issue each month to the committee. Mrs. Hitchcock requested that her office be informed of the issue one week prior to the meeting in order to put the item on the agenda and have time to prepare prior to the meeting.

**Student Council Report**

Senior Kaitlyn Warren, Vice President of Student Council, and Junior Kerrin O'Leary, Treasurer of Student Council, updated the committee on current events at the high school.

### **3. Report of the Administration**

#### **a. October 1<sup>st</sup> Enrollment, Including Historical Data**

Mrs. Hitchcock provided the October 1<sup>st</sup> data that is used to determine funding by the state. She noted that the count from October 1, 2013 of 1800 students reflects a reduction of 33 students from last year. This number includes 20 out-of-district special education students. She stated enrollment numbers will fluctuate as the year goes on.

#### **b. Presentation of Comprehensive 2013 MCAS Data**

Mrs. Hitchcock announced that the three principals Ms. Frederick, Mrs. Friedman and Mrs. Vasil, will be reporting on the 2013 MCAS results in a PowerPoint presentation.

#### **Elmwood Street School**

Principal Sue Frederick thanked the staff at Elmwood Street School for their hard work and dedication. She stated the state is no longer using the AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) accountability system. The new accountability system is based on five levels, with 1 being the highest. She also noted that MCAS in 2013 switched from the Massachusetts Frameworks to the Common Core focus. Although MCAS is only given to students in third grade and there is no cohort data, it is a team effort within the building.

Ms. Frederick's presentation included an Elmwood Action Plan including:

- Focus on using data to drive ELA instruction
- Data meetings every 6-8 weeks
- Vertical team meetings
- Interventions to help improve ELA skills
- Focus on District Literacy Plan
- Interventions to help improve math skills
- Information to parents
- Transition planning between Elmwood and Shaw schools
- Continued focus on improving writing skills

She indicated students are using a computer-based intervention called "Planet Turtle," where the student learns math while challenging other students at the same time.

Ms. Frederick presented the action plan and additional steps being used at Elmwood including the grade 3 participation in MAP testing (Measure of Academic Progress) in ELA and Math, since 2012 and grade 2 beginning in the fall of 2013. These results will provide cohort data for grade two into grade three. Teachers are implementing the new "My Math" program, which also includes an online component for curriculum and lesson plans.

#### **ELA**

Ms. Frederick noted that the performance target is set by the state for each school, which is set a little higher every year. The actual performance in 2013 was 89.0 (composite score) which missed the target of 91.8 by 2.8 points. This resulted in moving Elmwood School from a Level 1 in ELA to Level 2. Mr. Borowski commended Ms. Frederick and her staff noting that many factors come into play because every year there are two completely different groups of students involved in the testing.

Mrs. Nietupski questioned if the target will increase in 2014. Ms. Frederick noted that the state is looking for a target of 100 by the year 2016 for all students.

The ELA data over time indicates students can receive 4 ratings: Advanced, Proficient, Needs Improvement or Warning. Eighty percent of students consistently fell into Advanced or Proficient categories, while the Warning category is under ten percent.

The PPI (Progress and Performance Indicator) allows extra bonus points if at least ten percent of the aggregate is moved into the Advanced category or if 10% of the aggregate is moved out of the Warning category. Elmwood did not receive any PPI points in the area of ELA.

The ELA scores for 2013 indicate a decrease from 2012 to 2013 in the percentage of students in the Advanced and Proficient categories and an increase of percentage of students in the Warning category. The trend is to increase performance in Open Response questions.

### **Math**

In 2013, the actual performance score was 87.1 representing a slight increase from 2012, but Elmwood did not meet the set target of 91.4. Seventy-four percent of students fell into the Advanced or Proficient categories, while less than ten percent were in the Warning category.

Ms. Frederick noted that Elmwood did earn 25 extra credit points in math by moving at least 10% of the aggregate into the Advanced category.

Ms. Frederick stated that grade 3 sets the baseline for the cohort data in the upper grades. Elmwood will continue to use data and interventions to improve performance and implement the “My Math” program.

Mr. Borowski proposed the question, “If you did this - this would help.” Ms. Frederick responded that especially in kindergarten and grade one, oral language is critical. Research indicates how it improves reading and comprehension. Having a conversation with your child and asking for whole sentence responses makes a difference. This can continue into the older grades by reading together along with keeping up with math and reading in the summer months.

### **R.E. Shaw Elementary School**

Mrs. Miriam Friedman, principal of RE Shaw Elementary, noted that all students take MCAS in ELA and Math. Science and Technology is taken by grade 5 and ELA long composition is taken in grade 4.

Actions that have contributed to Shaw’s success include:

- CPT (Common Planning Time) by grade level and content area by grade
- Literacy plan component to continue with vertical alignment and sharing rubrics
- Transition planning with Elmwood and Junior High
- MAP testing and learning how to use the data
- 3 major data meetings in the year to review DIBELS, MAP and BASS

- 4 Square writing (teachers have seen improvement since it was used in Elmwood)
- Open response – higher level of improvement
- 2 Column Notes and Top Down Webs

Actions that need to continue include:

- Reviewing the Common Core to see how students do as a class
- Vertical alignment (teachers working together with 3rd grade teachers) and what gaps need to be filled in – data review and how to prepare for students to move on
- Improvement on writing process (long composition) essay writing is big focus
- Using MAP information to use information to help

Steps taken to improve:

- Creation of ELA Open Response checklists
- Big difference is collaboration with grade 3 teachers – to find how different experiences are.
- Support from reading specialist and reading coach to look at data and fill in gaps
- Peer observations – identify experts and observe teacher for feedback and techniques, use of common rubrics

Mrs. Friedman reviewed the differences between Open Response vs. Long Composition.

### ELA

The actual ELA performance in 2012-2013 was 88.9, which was slightly below the target of 90.8. Shaw still maintained Level 1 status, with the best year yet in grade 4. Mrs. Friedman reported on the actual performance results in grades 4, 5 and 6. She noted the Cohort data reflecting last year's grade 6 class through grades 4, 5 and 6 definitely shows progress was made. Shaw received ELA PPI points (extra credit) points in four areas. She outlined the actions that have contributed to Shaw's success and actions that need to continue.

### Math

Mrs. Friedman noted that Shaw has implemented the new math series of "Go Math" in grades 4 and 5 and "Big Ideas" in grade 6. She presented the year to year analysis: Grade 4 in 2013 reflects 61% of students in Advanced or Proficient categories, while only 6% are in the Warning category. Grade 5 Math shows an increase of students in the Advanced or Proficient categories (66% last year to 74% this year). There was a decrease of students in the Warning category from 16% last year to 6% this year. Grade 6 shows a slight dip in Advanced or Proficient categories from the year before (73% to 67%). Mrs. Friedman did note the Grade 6 cohort data shows gains are being made in Math. Shaw also received extra credit (PPI) points in Math.

### Science and Technology

Mrs. Friedman attributed the increase in numbers in the Advanced and Proficient categories and the decrease in numbers in the Warning category to the teachers' research on finding a science book that made a difference, as well as hand-on activities and

vertical alignment from grades 4 to 5. Shaw also received “extra credit” PPI points in Science and Technology. In summary, Mrs. Friedman stated the school is making significant gains, staff is working hard and the students are invested.

Mr. Borowski asked, “If we were to give you a blank check, what is the biggest hole to fill?” Mrs. Friedman stated, “At this time, it would be providing the opportunities to work on curriculum mapping. This would involve taking a look at the programs that we have and aligning to the Common Core.” She noted they have been fortunate in having parents that are working on starting a science club at the school and would like to see that continue with offerings of extracurricular activities with more academic components. Mrs. Nietupski noted the remarkable jump in science, and asked if they can expect a lag in math due to the new math program. Mrs. Friedman noted that while learning the new curriculum there is that possibility; however, she noted the teachers are extremely excited to have it and love the technology and resources available within the program.

### **Millbury Jr. /Sr. High School**

Mrs. Vasil, principal of Millbury Jr. /Sr. High School, thanked her faculty and staff for the success in 2013 MCAS at the high school. The changes that contributed to bringing them from a Level 2 to a Level 1 school included:

- Common prep period for core content areas of English, Math, Science, History and Foreign Language
- Incorporated Common Core Standards into the curriculum
- MAP testing implemented for grades 7, 8 and 9 two times a year
- Writing consultation for sophomores
- Common writing rubrics used between ELA/History
- PSAT testing – practice for MCAS testing and similar format provided more opportunities to practice procedure
- ELA and Math used MCAS type questions for warm-up activities (students are familiar and generates class discussion) students can focus on content
- Departmental meetings once a month and became interdisciplinary meeting for discussing struggling students
- Drop everything and read during the 5<sup>th</sup> period block period allowing 15 minutes to read (teachers as well) to develop vocabulary skills and general discussion

### **ELA**

Mrs. Vasil noted the actual performance from 2010-2013 is relatively steady and status was maintained in the low to mid 90's.

Grade 7 ELA had small increases in 2010, 2011, 2012. In 2013, the 10% increase in the Proficient category resulted in reaching the Level 1 status.

Grade 8 ELA had similar results from 2012 to 2013. Mrs. Vasil did note that the statewide MCAS testing for grade 8 testing is considered most difficult.

Grade 10 ELA had 0 in the Warning category and 95% in the Advanced and Proficient categories.

The Class of 2015 Cohort represents the grade 11 students this year. In 2013, there were 0 in the warning category, with continued gains in the Advanced and Proficient categories.

The high school received PPI extra credit points in ELA for moving at least 10% of the aggregate into the Advanced category. Mrs. Vasil cited the Literacy Activities in 2012-2013 that helped bring about this progress.

### **Math**

Mrs. Vasil reported that although the actual performance in 2012 and 2013 were above the performance targets, they did not exceed the 10% mark set by the state.

Grade 7 Math resulted in 66% of students in the Advanced or Proficient categories, which is a significant increase from prior years.

Grade 8 Math showed an increase in the Proficient category by 8% and 2% in the Advanced category, resulting in the 10% increase contributing to the Level 1 status. Mrs. Vasil noted that with the implementation of the new math program this year, issues that have been keeping the math scores low are now being addressed.

Grade 10 Math shows a slight decrease in the Advanced and Proficient categories; however the Advanced category had an increase of 7% from the previous year.

The Class of 2015 Math cohort indicates significant improvement in the Advanced category from 15% in grade 7, to 19% in grade 8, and 58% in grade 10.

The Math PPI extra credit points resulted in moving at least 10% of the aggregate into Advanced and moving at least 10% of the aggregate out of the Warning category.

### **Science & Technology**

Mrs. Vasil noted that in 2011, the state started calculating scores in Science and Technology setting the baseline. She noted that although the numbers in 2012 and 2013 are above the targets, there is still quite a bit of work to be done in the science area.

Mr. Borowski questioned the reasoning for the Level 2 status in 2012, since the data shows that they exceeded the performance target. Mrs. Vasil explained it was because they did not exceed the target by 10% in every category across the board. This was accomplished in 2013, moving the high school to the Level 1 status.

Grade 8 Science & Technology

Students in 2013 maintained similar scores from the previous years.

Grade 9 & 10 Science (Biology)

Mrs. Vasil noted that although most students take biology in grade 10, some advanced students take biology in grade 9. These grade 9 students can opt to take their MCAS in Science as a grade 9 student. In 2012, 88% of students were in the Advanced or Proficient categories. However, in 2013 only 65% were in Advanced or Proficient. Mrs. Vasil stated the science department is researching if the test was more difficult in 2013 causing the decline and to address the issues before the testing is done this year.

Science & Technology/Engineering

Mrs. Vasil noted this data also includes both grade 9 and 10 students, with grade 9 students eligible to take the MCAS in Engineering in grade 9. Again, this does not allow for a good cohort of the data. She did report a steady increase in Engineering MCAS scores over the years, and credited Mr. Bruce Rawley, former engineering and technology teacher, for introducing the robotics program to the district.

The high school earned PPI extra credit points in Science for moving at least 10% of the aggregate into the Advanced category.

Mrs. Vasil outlined the continued actions and primary goals for the high school in 2013-2014, with the number one goal as maintaining the high school in a Level 1 status.

Mr. Borowski congratulated Mrs. Vasil and her staff on their success. He questioned her number one regret for not having the time to accomplish "x"? Mrs. Vasil stated the number one thing is the time to search out grant funding. She would like to see teachers have more current technology in their classroom. She noted that while Smart Boards are cost prohibitive, they have purchased interactive projectors which are similar to Smart Boards while costing significantly less.

#### **4. Budget**

##### **a. Review of Revolving Accounts**

Mr. Bedard provided two revolving account reports: One is a summary through the end of the last fiscal year and one is for the first quarter of this year through September 2013. He noted that four of the revolving accounts are used to offset school department salaries. These accounts are Dorothy Manor Revolving, Elmwood Preschool Revolving, Non Resident Tuition Revolving, and AfterCare Revolving.

Mr. Bedard made note of the following:

- Summer School account is down from last year since receipts come in at the end of the fiscal year
- Dorothy Manor account also shows a decrease due to the recent repair work done in the basement of the building
- School Facilities account has decreased due to maintenance of gym floors in the district
- Aftercare Program is running well and has increased since the last fiscal year
- Student Parking account has gone up a bit from last year
- School Lunch account has gone down due to the Shaw freezer purchase and installation

Mr. Bedard indicated the Student Parking account funds will eventually be used to resurface the driveway at the high school including filling any cracks and painting lines.

##### **b. DRAFT 2015 Budget Timeline**

Mrs. Hitchcock referred to the DRAFT budget timeline listing January 8, 2014 as the first presentation of the 2015 budget including any proposed warrant articles. The Public Hearing is scheduled for February 26, 2014 with two more meetings on January 22 and February 12 to discuss salient points. Mrs. Nietupski noted the one warrant article for technology that has already been discussed. Mrs. Hitchcock concurred, noting this is for the completion of the wireless service in the district. Mr. Bedard stated the 2015 DRAFT budget timeline will be posted on the school website.





**10. Adjourn**

Mrs. Nietupski asked for a motion to adjourn at 8:45 p.m. Mr. Borowski made the motion, seconded by Mrs. Vigneau. All in favor (5-0).

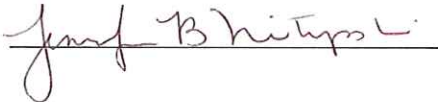
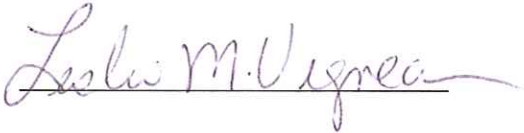
Respectfully submitted,

*Sandra Femino*

Sandra Femino

Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Approved:



**Items in Packet:**

Draft of Regular Session Minutes of 9/25/2013  
October 1, 2013 Enrollment  
MCAS 2013 PowerPoint Presentations  
Revolving Account Summary – 6/30/13  
Revolving Account Summary – 9/30/13  
DRAFT 2014-2015 Budget Development Timeline  
SWCEC 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Report (July 1, 2013-September 30, 2013)  
Schedule for Professional Development Day 10/11/2013  
Copy of Annual Report to Town of Millbury 2012-2013  
Congratulatory Letter to A. DiDomenica