

## Millbury School Committee Minutes

**Date:** November 10, 2010

**Present:** Mrs. Vigneau, Chairperson, Mr. Corey, Vice Chairperson, Mr. Plante, Mr. Clawson, Mrs. Nietupski, Ms. Simanski, Principal Shaw Elementary School, Ms. Ablove, Vice Principal Elmwood Street School, Mr. Fleming, High School Principal, Mrs. Molnar, Director of Pupil Services, Mr. Bedard, Business Administrator, and Mrs. Hitchcock, Superintendent

**Location:** High School Media Center

**Time:** 7:00 pm

Mrs. Vigneau brought the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

### **Approval of Regular Minutes**

Mrs. Vigneau asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the October 13, 2010. Mr. Corey made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 13, 2010 meeting and Mr. Plante seconded the motion. All approved (5-0).

### **Approval of Executive Minutes**

Mrs. Vigneau stated that she would motion to approve the Executive Session minutes from the October 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. Mr. Corey made a motion to accept the minutes from the October 7<sup>th</sup> meeting and Mr. Clawson seconded the motion. All approved (5-0). Mrs. Vigneau stated that she would like to hold the minutes from the October 13<sup>th</sup> and October 26<sup>th</sup> Executive Sessions Minutes until Executive Session.

### **Student Council/Advisory Council**

Kristen Bullet and Taylor Fox reported on the events taking place at the high school. They also gave reports on the fall sports teams.

### **Report of the Administration**

Race to the Top Grant:

Mrs. Hitchcock stated that the Race to the Top Grant was a very complicated project that all the administrators worked on and will bring \$121,729 into the district over four years once the project is approved. The first year will be used as a planning year, \$11,000 to support substitute teachers while allowing teachers to get trained. Some of the money will be used to pay stipends, and to focus on Professional Development. We have implemented twenty-five action steps that include expanding and restructuring the school day to include extra time for ELA and Math. We have provided before and after school

tutoring for ELA and Math for students. The Professional Development days have focused on the Power Standards. We bought a new ELA program that goes through grade 6 and purchased a new Math program for 7th and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that the first goal is that we are required to implement statewide evaluations frameworks. The Department of Education is working on a format that will set the criteria and will conduct hearings on the new regulations. The proposed activities are to make teachers more accountable. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that we have a good evaluation system now; however, there could be issues around criteria that we may be asked to add to our process. A committee will be formed in January which will include teachers, principals, directors, and teacher representative from the MTA. The next goal is to align the curriculum to the Core Curriculum developed by the state. Another goal will be to strengthen the climate at each school. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that she was proud of the climate in each building and we have a great foundation. A recommendation by Mr. Fleming and high school staff is that middle school students begin thinking about their futures and the reaches the average students and diverse students could be in AP classes at the high school.

#### Student Government Day:

Mrs. Hitchcock stated that Friday, November 19<sup>th</sup> is Student Government Day. It was stated that Mrs. Vigneau, Mrs. Nietupski, and Mr. Plante will be in attendance. Mrs. Vigneau stated that she was interested in the same format – a mock school committee meeting.

#### Field Trip to Washington:

Mrs. Hitchcock asked the School Committee to vote on the approval of a high school field trip to Washington. Mrs. Nietupski asked if the independent meals meant that the students would be left on their own. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that she would find out. Mrs. Vigneau asked for a motion to approve the field trip to Washington. Mr. Clawson made a motion to approve the field trip and Mr. Corey seconded the motion. All approved (5-0).

#### Update of Parent Letter to School Committee

Mrs. Hitchcock stated that due to recent events we have had a number of parents' complaints regarding the student handbooks. She also stated that she would like to send each school's handbooks to the attorney for review.

Mrs. Hitchcock also stated that included in the School Committee's packet was a letter from a parent asking that her child remain in the Millbury Public School District until the end of the school year as the child does not reside in Millbury any longer. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that she had informed the parent that the student could not continue to be educated in Millbury. She also stated that she receives several requests each year from families asking that their children remain in the Millbury Public Schools until the end of the year. Those families are also told that their children cannot continue their education in Millbury and that all students must be residents.

## **Superintendent's Evaluation**

### **I. School Committee Relationship**

- A. Mr. Plante stated that the rating system is 1-5. Mr. Plante stated that he thought Mrs. Hitchcock is doing an extremely great job and as a new school committee member her patience with answering all his questions has been great. She also keeps us very informed. Rating 4
- B. Mrs. Nietupski stated that as a new school committee member Susan has been an invaluable resource to her with the complexities of the education system. Timely well written reports. She is responsive to all questions at difficult times. She has had positive outlook through these difficult times. Rating 4.
- C. Mr. Corey stated that is still a work in progress between the School Committee and the Superintendent. Rating 3
- D. Mr. Clawson stated that he would like the audience to understand what the numbers mean. 1 is marginal, 2 satisfactory, 3 is fully satisfactory, 4 is excellent, and 5 is outstanding. This is a tough one to judge so much goes into the day to day sometimes hour to hour conversations that Mrs. Hitchcock has to have with five different people. Mrs. Hitchcock has improved on keeping the committee informed of events that happen during the school day. She has done a much better job in this area and he is no longer hearing about an event from a concerned parent on the street before Mrs. Hitchcock informs him. He stated it is not an easy job, however, there are always ways to improve. Rating 3
- E. Mrs. Vigneau stated that Susan has represented the School Committee well. She does not live in town; however, she has been at open houses, sporting events, and plays. She commented on her involvement on other board such as being the Executive Director of the Blackstone Valley Community Scholar. She has done a lot for our community. Recently, there were times that it bothered her that she heard things were happening before she told her, which bothered her. Also there were questions asked by the School Committee and she has been abrupt and dismissive with some of her answers. Her strengths definitely outweigh her weaknesses. I love her informational letter. I have told her forever that I miss the reports from the principals. I literally don't get that feel of what is going on in the schools. I rate Mrs. Hitchcock a 3.

### **II. Relationship with Government Agencies**

- A. Mr. Plante stated that he gave Mrs. Hitchcock an excellent 4 rating. She has done a great job with the Race to the Top grant and has worked very hard improving her relationship with the town. The budget will be very difficult in the next two years.
- B. Mrs. Nietupski stated that she also rated Mrs. Hitchcock with a 4 excellent. She stated that all deadlines have been met on time.
- C. Mr. Corey rated Mrs. Hitchcock a 4. Mr. Corey stated that Mrs. Hitchcock has worked to improve her relationship with the town. He also

stated that Mrs. Hitchcock biggest improvement was to crossover to the town side in a more insightful way.

- D. Mr. Clawson stated that Mrs. Hitchcock's relationship with the town and district are extremely important and that it has improved since her last evaluation. In the past, there has been some contention and Mrs. Hitchcock has worked hard toward rebuilding her relationship with the town. As far as the Federal and State agencies she has done a great job getting grants and following the standards put forward to us. Mr. Clawson stated that he ranked Mrs. Hitchcock a 4.
- E. Mrs. Vigneau stated that all deadlines have been met regarding the Federal and State agencies. She stated that she is pleased with the Shaw MCAS results but disappointed with Elmwood's results, however, I know they will come back. She stated she is thrilled with 43 seniors getting the Adams Scholarship for their MCAS results. She agreed with Tom, that sometimes she can be abrupt and dismissive when the School Committee has asked questions. She has also heard that she is sometimes abrupt and dismissive with questions asked by the town side. Mrs. Vigneau stated that she rated Mrs. Hitchcock with a 4 excellent because she deserves it.

### **III. Fiscal Management**

- A. Mr. Plante rated Susan with a 4 Excellent. She was very strong and completely knowledgeable about the FY2010 budget. She had to make hard decisions and she also reacted promptly when the additional Federal funds were received.
- B. Mrs. Nietupski stated that last year and this year were difficult years for the budget and that Mrs. Hitchcock has had to make difficult decisions regarding the budget. She also has had the great foresight to make adjustments to the FY2010 to continue with programs that began in FY2010 into FY2011, such as the Classroom Imagine at Shaw. She was able to successfully manage the federal money and maintain a professional staff with minimal budget dollars. Outstanding Rating 5
- C. Mr. Corey stated that it was a challenge for Mrs. Hitchcock to make the FY2011 budget. No one wanted to see cuts or an increase in class sizes. However, this year we weathered the storm. He stated that he rated Mrs. Hitchcock a 4.
- D. Mr. Clawson stated that he agreed with the Committee as a whole and rated Susan with a 4 excellent.
- E. Mrs. Vigneau stated that Susan's strengths outweigh her weaknesses and that she rated Susan with an Excellent 4. Luckily, the Federal Government came through this year and we did not realize our biggest cuts. She also stated that she sometimes didn't understand the tiers. Mrs. Vigneau stated that she was very disappointed that the School Committee was not able to vote on fees before it being placed on the budget sheets. Mrs. Vigneau stated that she would have like the option of voting on putting the fees on the budget. Mrs. Vigneau stated that the fees took on a life of their own and that school choice was not put on the budget because the School Committee voted it down. She

also stated that Susan did an excellent job with grants and she still gave her a 4 rating.

#### **IV. Personal Management**

- A. Mr. Plante ranked Mrs. Hitchcock a 5 outstanding. She has done a tremendous job hiring the Principals and Vice Principals. He stated that during parent's night at the Shaw Elementary School he kept hearing what a great job Ms. Simanski, Principal of the Shaw School is doing and that she has made a huge turn around to the school. Mrs. Hitchcock has worked hard on the Race to the Top grant and on improving her relationships with the town, which will be very important in the next two years of budget negotiations. We lost a great asset with the retirement of Linda Swenson, however, it has been a smooth transition so far this year and this is a testament to Susan as well.
- B. Mrs. Nietupski stated that throughout the community she hears compliments about the policies that have been set by the Superintendent. Mrs. Hitchcock is well regarded in the community. The Principals are well respected in the community because of the example set by Mrs. Hitchcock. She rated Mrs. Hitchcock a 5 outstanding.
- C. Mr. Corey rated Mrs. Hitchcock a 4. She has done an excellent job of hiring personnel. He also stated that Mrs. Hitchcock is respected by the teachers and community.
- D. Mr. Clawson stated that Mrs. Hitchcock has made a significant improvement since last year's evaluation. He also stated that it is extremely tough to go out and hire people all the time and to get it right most of the time and Mrs. Hitchcock gets it right pretty much all the time. He rated Mrs. Hitchcock a 4 excellent.
- E. Mrs. Vigneau stated that she was thrilled to see the teachers and community members present to support the Superintendent. She also stated that it shows her that Mrs. Hitchcock has a wonderful relationship with her staff. Mrs. Vigneau stated that she is excited about PBIS at Shaw and the mentoring program. She also stated that Mrs. Hitchcock does a phenomenal job hiring people. She rated 4.

#### **V. Curriculum**

- A. Mr. Plante rated Mrs. Hitchcock a 4. She has placed an emphasis on improving literacy and she is working hard to increase MCAS scores.
- B. Mrs. Nietupski rated Mrs. Hitchcock a 4 excellent. She has done an excellent job with the budget restraints. She has increased tutoring at the Shaw School in English Language Arts and Math and a new Marketing Course has been added to the high school schedule. Mrs. Hitchcock has also gotten outside grants to supplement the budget.
- C. Mr. Corey stated that he would like to see MCAS scores improve. He stated that this year there was a slight improvement. He stated that we have spent a lot of money on the Everyday Math Program and he would

like the Curriculum Coordinator to shed some light on this concern at another meeting. Mr. Corey stated that he rated Mrs. Hitchcock a 4.

- D. Mr. Clawson stated that Mrs. Hitchcock works hard to get the most out of kids and teachers. Mr. Clawson stated that he will continue to be concerned about the MCAS scores until the problem is resolved. He rated Mrs. Hitchcock a 3.
- E. Mrs. Vigneau rated Mrs. Hitchcock a 4 because she cut the Director of Curriculum's positions in half. She also stated that although Mrs. Hitchcock has a secretary he was her assistant. Mrs. Vigneau stated that this has led her to believe that Mrs. Hitchcock feels her curriculum is in good shape. This scares me; however, it is her decision.

## **VI. Building Report**

- A. Mr. Plante rated Mrs. Hitchcock a 5. He stated that the school buildings are immaculate and up to state codes. He also stated that with limited funds Mrs. Hitchcock was still able to make some improvements in the buildings.
- B. Mrs. Nietupski stated that the community can be proud of the school buildings and grounds in Millbury. She rated her a 5.
- C. Mr. Corey ranked Mrs. Hitchcock a 5. He stated that Mrs. Hitchcock's vision and attention to detail has not gone unnoticed in the schools. He stated that she puts the care and safety of the students and staff first. She has worked diligently to get the Warrant Article to install the stage lift at the Shaw School and the privacy panels replaced in the bathrooms. She is still working to get new fire doors at the Shaw School ADA compliant. She has been able to do this with her Facility Manager's position cut in half.
- D. Mr. Clawson rated Mrs. Hitchcock a 5 outstanding. The Business Manager and Facility Manager have kept the buildings in excellent shape and this is a reflection on Mrs. Hitchcock. Mr. Clawson also stated that the Business Manager and Facility Manager are going to need to work together to find more resources for the upkeep and improvements to the buildings as they are getting older. Mr. Clawson stated that with the cuts to the custodial staff this year we saw problems. We can't go down that road again and I know we won't.
- E. Mrs. Vigneau stated that she has only toured one school building so far this year and that was the Shaw Elementary. She stated that the school was in fabulous shape. It was stated that the Shaw School was over 40 years old. She stated that she was pleased that the Drainage Project at the High School was completed. She also stated that the Capital Improvement List that Mrs. Hitchcock and Mr. Bedard worked on was great. She stated that she rated Mrs. Hitchcock a 5.

Mrs. Hitchcock thanked the School Committee on the comprehensive review and appreciated that the School Committee recognized the challenges with running a school district. She also stated that it was more difficult with the budget restraints. Mrs.

Hitchcock also stated that she could not take the all the credit. She stated that the School Committee and she had some difficult times as the School Committee came up to speed with the Ed Reform Laws and the roles of the School Committee and the Superintendent. Mrs. Hitchcock also stated that she had a great staff and that she loved being here in this district.

### **Budget**

Mr. Bedard stated that a FY2012 time line was included in the packets. He stated that the principal and staff will gather the information needed for the budget and return it in late November or early December. The budget will be prepared to present to the School Committee on January 11th. The time line will be posted on the website for the community.

Mr. Bedard stated that there has been an increase in the special education out of district budget for this year. We have five new outside placements for this year. In addition, there have been retroactive rate increases for this year. Mr. Clawson asked for a percentage increase for each private school placement.

### **Old Business**

Mrs. Vigneau stated that the Community Service Learning Grant Committee is up and running.

### **New Business**

It was stated that the replacement of the fire doors at the Shaw School be placed on the agenda. The process for a warrant article has begun. It was stated that the Shaw School is out of compliance due to this issue.

Mrs. Hitchcock stated that she will have an anti-bullying policy ready for the School Committee by December 31<sup>st</sup>. She stated that she is adapting the state's model plan to the Millbury.

Mrs. Vigneau stated that in accordance with Chapter 30A. Section 21(a) (3) of the MA General Laws, the Millbury School Committee will vote to move into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing collective bargaining with the SEIU, Local 888. Mr. Plante – yes, Mr. Corey – yes, Mrs. Vigneau – yes, Mr. Clawson – yes, Mrs. Nietuipski – yes. yes.

Mrs. Vigneau stated that they will return to open session to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Lane  
School Committee Clerk