

Milan School Board Meeting

Tuesday, November 7, 2006
Milan Village School Library

Present: School Board Members: Chairman Mullins, Jacky Quintal
Administration: Paul Bousquet-Superintendent, Pauline Plourde-Business Administrator, Steven Gordon-Special Services Coordinator, David Backler-MVS Principal
Public – Karen Parker, Mike Giroux, Angie Giroux, Laura Oulette, Lynn Dubey, Sarah Sarette, Rich Sarette, Karen Patry, Paul Patry, Paul Oulette, Julie Glover, Karen Wheeler, Julie Evans, Gail Scott – Berlin Sun Reporter, Kimberly Hockmeyer-Recorder

I. Call to order

Chairman Mullins called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

II. Approval of October 3, 2006 minutes

Motion made by Quintal to accept the minutes as presented. Motion seconded by Mullins. No discussion. Vote 2-0. Motion approved.

III. Public Comment:

Rich Sarette addressed the Board on the topic of bullying and his son's safety. Sarette presented the history of bullying towards his son and the steps he has taken to rectify the problem. He has met with the former superintendent and wrote letters to the Board and provided the Board with copies of Statutes 193-F and 193-D. He stated that he wants to protect son and the rest of the kids in the school and he didn't feel the school met their needs.

Sarette stated that he met with the Superintendent to discuss his concerns with the lack of discipline and the bullying in the school and feels that it has gotten worse. He stated that his son witnessed another student being choked. Sarette stated that it is now ineffective to speak with the administrators and is now putting it in writing. He received a letter from Backler and was irritated that it included a line stating that the staff wasn't doing their job. Sarette stated that it was not appropriate to include that in a letter. Sarette stated that on October 18th his son was bullied and assaulted again. He expressed his dissatisfaction with how it has been handled, since he had provided the administration and the Board with the Statutes. Sarette directed a question to Bousquet to see if he was aware of the incident on October 18th.

Bousquet stated that he was uncomfortable discussing this issue in a public forum and that it was the Board's prerogative to act on this. Bousquet expressed his concern, again, of discussing this in public, but stated that yes, he was informed of the incident.

Sarette continued that 193 D states that any assault must be reported to the law enforcement. He checked with the Berlin Police Department, and it was not done. It also states that a letter must be written within 48 hours from Principal to law enforcement, and that was not done. A letter written and sent home in the required 48 hours was not done. Sarette stated that he then wrote a letter to the Department of Education. Sarette stated that he has filed a violation with the Berlin Police Dept.

Sarette continued that when Backler did speak with his son, Backler stated he was proud that his son did not fight back. Sarette stated that Backler added that he could have beaten up the bully. Sarette stated that he has not raised his son to be violent and resented that comment. Sarette expressed his disapproval of the incentive for the bully – a violent youth, to come to Backler’s house and learn how to shoot skeet.

Bousquet stated that Backler is the principal and it is up to him to deem what is bullying or not. He gave examples of single incidents of a push or a shove between students, and that was not bullying. Bousquet gave an example that made the press a few years back where an administrator charged a 1st grader with sexual harassment for kissing another 1st grader. Building administrators make the calls on what bullying is. Bousquet added that Backler’s goal is to make the school as positive as possible and applauded Sarette for his support of his son.

Sarette stated that his son should not feel unsafe at school or at recess and read a definition of bullying which included name calling, intimidation, as well as physical contact. Sarette described the basketball bullying incident.

Bousquet asked what Sarette was looking for from the Board.

Sarette stated that he wanted the school to be safe and the only way to accomplish that was to have Mr. Backler to be relieved from his duties.

Sarette gave examples of Backler’s behavior while substituting in his son’s class – he allowed arm wrestling, which Sarette disapproved of. Sarette also demanded that only one of the following three adults always be present if Backler speaks with his son - Mike Giroux, Jacky Quintal, or himself.

Quintal asked which staff member was on duty during the basketball incident. Sarette stated Norm Roberge. Bousquet stated that additional conversation would need to be in nonpublic session, since staff was being discussed. Bousquet reiterated Sarette’s request for a safe school for his son, and to have one of the 3 adults present in any discussions with Sarette’s son.

Sarette requested a letter from the Board to follow the Due Process.

Laura Ouellette stated that she has experienced similar concerns that Rich Sarette has expressed. Bousquet asked if she has spoken with Backler. Ouellette stated yes. Bousquet requested that she contact him to discuss this matter further. She stated that she had academic concerns as well and reiterated that she saw the same things as Rich did. Bousquet asked her to contact him to discuss this further, and encouraged her to call and if he is not available to leave a voice message and he will return the call or to email him at pbousquet@sau20.org.

Julie Glover stated that as a parent, she feels that her child is very safe and every experience has been positive with Dave Backler.

Sarah Sarette stated that she will not be back to the school until this issue is resolved. Bousquet asked what she meant. Sarah Sarette stated that she is her son’s classroom teacher and just because she is there, doesn’t mean she is responsible. She feels that she has been very professional with Backler regarding the incident. She stated that she doesn’t appreciate being accused of being the only one who has an issue with Backler.

Bousquet asked what it means if she chooses not to return. Sarah Sarette stated she has her son to think about.

Bousquet stated she was approved to teach her son in 5th grade, not 6th grade, and that if she feels she can't come back, than it is her choice.

Rich Sarette stated that if Sarah Sarette doesn't return to be the teacher, then he would request the Milan School Board pay tuition to the Berlin School District for his son, and that he would file a lawsuit.

Bousquet asked what his time line would be.

Rich Sarette stated that if his request is not granted, that he will go to the appeals process.

Public Session ended at 7:05.

IV. Written Communications:

Bousquet distributed vouchers for the Board to sign.

Bousquet distributed the list of students and their tuition to Berlin

Karen Patry stated that she would have thought the board would read her letter. Mullins read her resignation letter. Mullins stated that the Board accepted her letter with regret. Bousquet asked if Patry would be comfortable stating what her position was, for the reporter. She stated it would be ok – Bousquet stated that she was the paraprofessional in grade 5 and 6.

V. Principal's Report

Backler asked if there were any questions on the report, which included copies of schedules from 3 random days for the Student Support Center Paraprofessional. Quintal stated that there was a lot of secretarial work. Backler agreed that she was responsible for data entry.

Quintal asked for MAPS testing and how it was scored. Backler offered to spend time with Quintal to walk her through the data. Quintal stated that she had a hard time figuring out, because of the levels. Discussion. Backler reiterated his invitation so he could explain the program to her. Bousquet added that the NWEA website has excellent explanations as well.

- Wellness Policy 2nd Reading

Motion made to Quintal to accept the Wellness Policy - JLCF. Motion seconded by Mullins. No discussion. Vote: 2:0. Motion approved.

Bousquet requested a clean copy emailed to the SAU office so it may be added to the Policy book.

VI. Superintendent's Report

- Berlin Police Department and the Milan School District now have a Memorandum of Understanding in place.

- Policy Books are all updated. Everything that the NHSBA has sent is in the Books.

-Section J, 2nd reading

Quintal asked if there were any changes or additions. Board will have Section J, 2nd reading in December.

- Audio Recording on School Buses Appendix 2nd Reading

Motion made by Quintal to adopt Appendix R Audio Recording on School Buses. Motion seconded by Mullins. No discussion. Vote 2:0 Motion approved.

- Milan SAU Withdrawal Committee update

Bousquet stated they will send a copy of the report to the DOE and include their report in the annual town report. Board all commented on the Committee and how they worked well and objectively.

- AREA Agreement with Berlin

Bousquet stated that the Berlin School Board voted to amend the AREA agreement to 5 years. Quintal asked about the time line. Bousquet explained the process, and that the Board will need to act on the agreement. Bousquet described Dummer's steps forming a committee to withdrawal. Mullins asked about the legal interpretation of the 5 year agreement. Discussion. Quintal if Bousquet has spoken with John Moulis. Bousquet responded yes, and Berlin has taken action and now it is up to the Milan Board to take action. After discussion, Board decided to table until Shute is available.

- Letter from/to DOE Commissioner Tracy

Bousquet explained to the public that the board had requested keeping the funds instead of returning to the town to cover unexpected special educational costs. Bousquet explained that there are other avenues to cover the expenses. Quintal reiterated her concern that this shouldn't affect the MVS kids.

- Other

Bousquet nominated John Roberge, a paraprofessional, to be on step 4 for \$11.74/hour, for a total of \$10,707. Backler described his education and experience.

Motion made by Quintal to enter non public session per RSA 91-A:311- b at 7:45 PM. Motion seconded by Mullins. Quintal – yes, Mullins – yes. Motion approved.

Motion made by Quintal to exit nonpublic session at 8:04 PM. Motion seconded by Mullins. Quintal – yes, Mullins – yes. Motion approved.

Motion made by Quintal to hire John Roberge as a paraprofessional, based on a 90 day probationary period, on Step 4, \$11.75 per hour, per Policy GDF. Motion seconded by Mullins. No Discussion. Vote 2-0. Motion approved.

VII. Business Administrator's Report

- Paraprofessional Benefits from the Area

Quintal presented a spreadsheet of benefits paraprofessionals have in the area. Discussion. Quintal will give recommendations to the SAU to see the actual costs and will revisit at the December meeting.

- Budget 2007-2008

Plourde walked the Board through the Budget Worksheet and gave the Board a synopsis of the Budget Discussion. No action taken. Budget will be revisited at December meeting.

VIII. Special Education Director's Report

Gordon discussed the IDEA funds, and that Milan may receive an additional \$5,000. in funds for vocational ed at Berlin High School.

Gordon discussed a new feature that he and Sweeney-Hebert are doing. They are highlighting their staff by having a member write a report. This month's report was written by Paula Labrecque.

Quintal stated she had questions and would discuss in nonpublic session.

IX. Agenda Items for Next Meeting, December 5, 2006

- Section J, 2nd Reading
- Section G, 1st Reading
- Final AREA Agreement
- SWIS Data
- Special Education Director's Report
- Budget 2007-2008
- MAPS Data

X. Other

Quintal offered in lieu of a year's rent for the storage of the tractor, she would like a hole filled in her yard. Board agreed.

Quintal asked about the Roy Foundation balance. Plourde stated that it was spent.

Quintal stated that she had applied for a grant to the Roy Foundation and presented a copy of the application to Plourde.

XI. Non Public Session

Motion made by Quintal to enter nonpublic session under RSA 91-A:311-C. Motion seconded by Mullins. Quintal – yes, Mullins – yes. Motion approved. Board entered nonpublic session at 9:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly A. Hockmeyer
Recorder for the Board