

Milan School Board Meeting

Monday, October 6, 2008

Dummer Town Hall

Minutes of Joint Meeting with Berlin and Dummer

Present: Milan School Board – Kevin Evans, Patricia Shute

Dummer School Board – Julie Glover, Jennifer Miller

Berlin School Board – Martha Laflamme, Nathan Morin, Nicole Plourde

Administration: Berlin Superintendent John Moulis, SAU #20 Superintendent Paul Bousquet, Business

Administrator Pauline Plourde, Special Education Co-Director Steven Gordon, Milan Village School

Principal Dave Backler

Public: Gail Scott, Elizabeth Ruediger

I. Call to Order

Dummer Chair Jennifer Miller called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

II. Joint Meeting with Berlin and Dummer Boards

1. Questions

Miller opened the discussion for questions and answers.

Shute discussed the possibilities of a 4 day week. Moulis explained that due to previous pressure with high price of oil, it is worth discussion, with strong input from parents. Bousquet explained that it is daunting with changing sporting events, etc. N. Plourde explained that the public brought the issue to the Board to discuss the possibility of a 4 day week, and there are a lot of answers still to get – after school program impact, sports programs, etc. Moulis repeated the need for more information – i.e. SAT program that is on a Saturday, which would require the building to be opened. Moulis added that the only model was in Deerfield, NH, who had a 4 day week with Friday being a community day for staff, parents, etc.

Discussion on option of longer winter vacation for energy conservation.

Miller thanked Berlin board for handbook updates.

Miller asked for any building updates. Moulis responded that Berlin has three ‘almost’ 100 year old buildings. The ideal for efficiency would be to have a primary grade elementary school stand by itself. He added that our facilities are still going, and have been for 4-5 generations. He added that Berlin is still doing building projects – air exchangers, energy performance project, also looking to see how to utilize our buildings efficiently.

Bousquet discussed the different schedule for the NECAP tests. It is a different schedule for Juniors. He added that Berlin is being proactive on the NECAP, sending the message that it’s important. N. Plourde added that students will be in small group testing situations.

Bousquet asked if there was anything on the horizon that will affect our students – there is a high school redesign coming up. Moulis stated that regionalization should always be there to think of as we look at our resources.

Shute stated the need to look at regionalization seriously since numbers are dropping, the costs are increasing, and there are duplicated services. Glover asked who is against regionalization. Laflamme stated that it depends on who you ask. N. Plourde stated that Berlin SD gets its money from the city council.

Plourde stated that the Berlin board would have to ask the Gorham Randolph Shelburne Co-op to do the study because it is in the state statutes. Moulis stated that from his perspective, a co-op is not as efficient as a regionalization. He added it usually becomes a money issue, based on the amount each community would pay and there may still be the elementary schools in the towns, but to make sure the programs are the same. Moulis stated when everybody comes together at a middle school and high school; everyone wants to hold onto what's theirs - mascots, school colors, etc.

Bousquet stated that what needs to happen is to follow the RSAs, which states who does what when. Bousquet stated that Moulis is right and gave the example of when White Mountain Regional was formed, and even though it has been in effect for many years, the alumni from the individual towns still attend their own reunions.

Plourde explained that the Co-op had its own law, and kept the names of the schools. She added that there are things to work out, but it is a process. Miller stated there will be people who balk at this, but the goal is to educate our children. Miller stated that we need to look as a community what is best for our kids, and every year when things are not working for our kids, we are losing a year. She stated that if this makes sense, then we need to look at it.

Miller asked what is the toughest thing for your schools. Is it funding? AYP? Morin stated that education is costing more and the city is struggling to get its taxes. Moulis added that we would always like more money, but in fact, we still work to replace books. Moulis added that they are adding programs – pre engineering programs, technology programs. Moulis stated the facilities are in need - they have gone beyond the technology for the efficiency of heat and electricity. Many of the programs are on the cutting edge of technology – shops, graphic arts, health occupations, and will be taking on a bio technology component.

Miller asked if there are any problems keeping the teachers. N. Plourde stated that we replaced retiring teachers as needed. Moulis stated that they shifted one position to a different level due to population. Glover asked if there are larger class sizes. Moulis stated that they thought with St. Michael's closing, they would gain a lot of additional students, but there weren't many in each class, so the numbers didn't rise too high. Moulis added that they are losing students as well. Moulis stated that they should have fewer retirees in the next few years. Bousquet asked if Berlin's faculty leave at the end of the year or after 3 year notification. Moulis stated that many do the 3 year notification and some do just leave.

Miller asked if Berlin ever participated in the My Voice Survey. Moulis responded that they had used it in the past, but didn't use it this year. He stated that it is under new ownership, so state couldn't afford it, hence they couldn't use it. He agreed that they got great feedback and lots of information.

Miller asked if Berlin participates in the US Senate Youth program. Moulis stated that they have a youth and government program.

Miller asked if Berlin had any questions for Milan or Dummer

Moulis directed attention to the PBIS information and that it is a process. He stated that the high school brought the program in and now they are bringing it down to the junior high level.

Miller asked if there are any other questions and thanked everyone for coming.

(Berlin Board Members left)

III. 6:47 Joint Meeting of Dummer and Milan School Boards

IV. Principal's Report

Backler stated that NECAP testing starts tomorrow. He has been looking at NWEA results, and seeing the improvements and feeling very confident.

Backler reported on a curriculum meeting. They are looking at the five year plan which will give teachers a map of where the school is going. He added that science curriculum is cross curricular and they are looking at math. He gave a brief overview of a national report on what kids need to know in math. He added that if a student makes it through algebra 2, they will succeed, so what skills do they need to have success? What are the researched based skills students will need? We are looking at state GLEs, NECAP data, our kids, and other data to see what we need to do to implement. Miller asked if there are specific programs Backler is looking at for math. Backler stated they are looking at some programs that match the GLEs and the strengths of our school. Miller stated that at a previous school, her children used Every Day Math and was surprised with the intense concepts that started early. She stated that it was amazing what the children could learn and as parents, they were amazed at how it worked. Backler stated that when personalities are taken out, we can say what are our needs? What are our GLEs? He said everything needs to bump up a grade and we saw the positive results from this. He stated our goals are the same – to get the kids at grade level. Backler can't implement all programs in a year, that it takes 5 years to acquire, then 7 years to fully implement. We set short term, medium term and long term goals. Evans asked if we would be looking at implementing new math in 2009 –2010. Backler replied that we will either have a new program or fit ours to the GLEs. Evans asked if school is looking at changing books, and if so, the timeline is the next 2 months, since we need to be looking at for budget purposes. Bousquet stated the board can adjust money for science program to math programs. Backler stated that the reason for a 5 year plan, a taxpayer, can see where we are going and by 2013 we will be fully aligned to the GLEs.

Backler reported on the Student Support Center. The SSC is focusing on struggling math students and high achieving math students. They are finding interventions for weaknesses.

Miller asked about the Disaggregated Science Results and that there is no information on females. Backler reported that he will look into it.

Miller asked if there is any way to look at social studies. Backler stated there are GLEs for social studies and that he is working with individual teachers to meet the GLEs.

Construction Report

Backler presented a recap over the past 1 ½ years, and that even though they got a great company to re-roof the school, they found out we had other issues - a chimney that was in need of replacement. There was a lot of heat coming into room from chimney and it was heating up the attic space. Now there is a vent on every other joist space. Backler added that an intercom system will be installed this weekend. Bousquet added that a temperature control exhaust fan was installed.

Backler stated that the school started a contract with Honeywell to control boiler temperatures, but not all parts installed yet. It is a computerized system to watch our consumption and they will be able to look at the data and see how much do we save over the weekends, etc.

Backler added that they are replacing exterior doors that have air gaps. Shute stated that the new roof reduced our heating bills by 25% already. Glover asked what the temperature will be set at school. Backler stated they want to control boiler water temperature. Miller asked about the interior work. Backler stated all tiles are replaced. Plourde stated the engineer has been very impressed with the work and that everything has been done well. Backler stated from starting the project in 2001, we are very close to being completed.

Backler added that a sign has been designed by Andre Bellaigeron will be installed soon.

Evans added that Backler and Dennis Rossingol have created a 30 year maintenance plan.

V. SPED Director's Report

Gordon reported on a workshop on Special Education Law that was very worthwhile.

Performance Tracker program analysis provides ways to change approaches with certain kids so they will receive the specific help they need.

Gordon reported that at the Law Conference, he met with Parent Information Center and will be setting up a 3 part series for parents to alert parents of what they need to know so they may advocate for their children.

Report on Home Schooled Students

Gordon reported on the status of the Home Education Program. He reported that in Milan there are 2 children in grades 1 and grades 6 and in Dummer there are students in grades 5, 6, 7 and 10th. Gordon reported that what a parent needs to do to home educate is that they can write to the commissioner or to Bousquet, stating the age of child, beginning and end of program and name and address of parent. Gordon stated that the Co-op has a school board policy JJ8A, which states that students who are home educated can participate in programs, if eligibility criteria met (immunizations, for example). Gordon stated that parents need to have a portfolio kept for 2 years, or a certified teacher will need to validate program and/or take state assessment or standardized test. The child must demonstrate educational progress that meets with other children of their age and ability. Gordon added that a home program can be put on probation for a year if not meeting progress, and if no progress in the 2nd year, parents lose the right to home educate.

Miller asked if they could look at Performance Tracker. Backler stated that anyone can check it out on the state site.

Miller asked if there are any concerns over past year, month, if there are any trends with more students having difficulty at the high school or at the elementary school. Gordon replied that it is a bit frustrating working with another SAU because they do not have same comprehensive program as we do. He stated that if a child starts to slip at the elementary school, we can deal and adjust programs. At the secondary level, there is a limit to how to help the students, and currently do this by hiring 1 on 1s, which is not the best. It is a system wide problem at the secondary level - staff is fine, they work diligently, but they lack to have total continuum of services as the elementary school does.

Miller asked if we have a child that becomes in need, do we have a system in place to pick them up. Gordon replied that at MVS, there is a target team, special ed services, 504, and the student support center to act as a safety net. At the secondary level - junior and senior high school, he is there a couple times a week, which makes it difficult for a child to languish for a period of time without receiving an intervention.

Gordon departed at 7:40 PM

VI. Superintendent's Report

Bousquet reported that Dummer AREA Withdrawal Plan is going before NH Department of Education on Wednesday.

Bousquet reported on Alert Now which costs \$3 per student. The program will call cell phones, parents, teachers, paras, school board members. It can be customized for specific situations. He will discuss at SAU Board meeting.

Dummer Board Member search update. Bousquet stated that no one has responded to the ad, although member of public, Elizabeth Ruediger may be a possibility.

Bousquet wants discussion on wording on warrant for Dummer School Board Policy for student choice.

Bousquet stated that Policy KF, a policy on use of building including rates, will be updated.

Miller opened the meeting for discussion.

Miller asked if Dummer can get Milan Handbook update changes in the future. Shute replied yes.

Bousquet stated that they are meeting with Thayer regarding a pellet boiler which will cost about \$200,000., including installation. Miller asked about availability of pellets and in the long term, is it viable? Backler stated the system would work on pellets or chips.

Miller asked about energy efficient lights? Backler stated most of the new construction has the energy efficient lights. Bousquet added that RSAs are specifying light switches include motion sensors for turning on lights. Evans asked about talking with staff regarding turning off lights when leaving room. Backler responded yes.

Miller asked the Milan Boards what they think the biggest challenges they will be facing for the next 1 to 3 years.

Shute stated that curriculum is taking care of, now looking at energy resources, regionalization of services, and improving communication in the community.

Evans stated that they are experiencing tough economic times and how we can provide same educational services for less money. Miller commented on classes getting smaller.

Backler stated that they have one small class of 9 in kindergarten; another small class of 13 and is it a trend? Glover commented that with numbers of going down, have you considered keeping 7th and 8th grade in Milan? Shute replied that it was discussed at last meeting, but they do not feel it is economically feasible to meet the state requirements, let alone sports, activities, special programming.

Glover asked if students could participate in Gorham. If numbers keep going down, should consider it as a possibility. Shute stated the conversation has to go towards regionalization before it becomes too small.

Backler stated that need to go into the budget cycle with all of the facts. Milan provides individualized attention. Milan pays \$5800 to educate a pupil in Milan which is less than educating in Berlin.

Evans asked if Dummer Board had concerns for Milan. Miller applauded Milan with a great job with curriculum meetings. She added that communication was a problem at last year's town meeting. Plourde explained the budget process and that administrators have been given their budgets. Plourde stated they will have preliminary budgets by December 1, 2008.

8:25 PM Dummer board relocates to continue their meeting.

Milan School Board

VII. Minutes of September 2, 2008

Motion made by Evans to accept the minutes of September 2, 2008 as presented. Motion seconded by Shute. No discussion. Vote: 2-0. Motion approved.

VIII. Written communications

1. Staff Directory

2. Berlin Board Minutes

Shute commented on the tuition levels are set for next year and exceed \$10,000. Discussion on Milan's tuition rate to Dummer.

3. Dummer Withdrawal Minutes /Board Minutes

IV. Principal's Report continued

1. Technology Plan

Backler reported that the Technology Plan has been revised and will be submitted to the state.

Motion made by Evans to accept the Milan School District Technology Plan 2008 as presented. Motion seconded by Shute. No discussion. Vote: 2-0. Motion approved.

VI. Superintendent's Report continued

Policy KF – Use of School Buildings and Facilities

Motion made by Evans to accept the first reading of Policy KF – use of school buildings and facilities policy. Motion seconded by Shute. No discussion. Vote: 2-0. Motion approved.

IX. Business Administrator's Report

Milan Tuition students to Berlin reviewed by Board. Shute signed the tuition responsibility.

X. Nonpublic Session

Motion made by Evans to enter nonpublic session per RSA 91-A:311C at 8:42 PM. Motion seconded by Shute. Evans – yes, Shute – yes. Motion approved. Board entered nonpublic session at 8:42 PM.

Motion made by Evans to exit non public session at 8:45 PM. Motion seconded by Shute. Evans – yes. Shute – yes. Motion approved.

Board returned to public session.

Motion made by Evans to purchase a slot at the Charter Academy. Motion seconded by Shute. No discussion. Vote: 2-0. Motion approved.

Shute asked for an update on the After School program. Backler reported that there are 10 students and a waiting list.

XI. Next meeting will be on Tuesday, November 4, 2008 at Milan Village School.

XII. Adjournment

Motion made by Evans to adjourn. Motion seconded by Shute. No discussion. Vote: 2-0. Motion approved.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Hockmeyer
Recorder for the Board