Milton School Committee Meeting Minutes
September 2, 2026
Former Fire Station Headquarters
In Person and Via Zoom
7pm

Committee Present: Chair; Mark Loring; Vice Chair; Anna Varghese, Dr. Elizabeth Carroll, Stevie Caldwell, Dr. Nathan Hutto, Bao Qiu

Staff Present: John Phelan, Superintendent; Karla Koza, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching & Learning; James Malary, Director of Business and Finance

1. **Call to order -** 7pm

2. **Approve September 2, 2026 Agenda**
   Approved

3. **Public Comment (Policy BEDH-15 minutes)**

JJ O'Connor - 20 Marine Road

- Calling about the purchase of land at the Laboure and how it affects the new school being talked about at Gile Road
- I was a Warrant Committee Member 2021-2024
- Familiar with the School Building process and everything going on
- Love the fact that the town has the chance to purchase another property (Laboure)
    - Similar situation came up a few years again with Fontbonne
- With Laboure are you saying we don't need this and the Gile Road Project?
- Gile Road was voted on at Town Meeting
- Is purchasing the Laboure going to delay the building of Gile Road?
- If it does cause a delay it concerns me as a citizen
- The new school building process has been going on for almost 8 years now
- The further the delays, the more the cost to the town and our children
- What is the plan to engage parents in the plan for the Laboure?
- Is the MSBA process going to have to start over?
- Has there been a discussion about the pro's and con's between the Laboure vs Gile Road?
- Seems like we are always looking for a magic bullet here in Milton, looking at new land and then forgetting about the other land
- We have a plan, why throughout something else into the mix that may not be thoroughly vetted

4. **Superintendent's Report -** Superintendent Phelan
    a. Opening of School Update - Presentation Link below:
        - https://files-backend.assets.thrillshare.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/4813/Mps/ca50c78d-8d8f-4302-80c9-c8aec306c8ec/SC.OpeningSchool.9.2-2026.pdf?disposition=inline

Superintendent Phelan

- Read through and shared presentation slides below:

New Milton Public School Staff

- Since June 2026 the district has had annual turnover of resignations, retirements and reallocation of roles not filled during the 2025/26 school year.
- In total we had postings for 77 roles in Milton Public Schools. The district team hired 58 new staff across the district in various roles and 19 were filled internally.
- We have filled 70 positions: 38 Unit A Educators, 3 Unit B Administrators, 2 Unit C, 24 Unit D Para Professionals and 3 Cabinet Level Professionals
- We still have 7 vacancies
    - Director of Nursing
    - 4 Unit D (Ed Assistants)
    - 2 Unit C (Lunch/Recess Aides)

New Milton Public School Central Office Professional Staff

- James Malary - Director of Finance and Operations
- Dr. Christine Lyons - Director of Human Resources
- Jamele Adams - Director of Equity, Inclusion and Belonging

Superintendent Phelan welcomed Dr. Christine Lyons, Director of Human Resources, James Malary, Director of Finance and Operations and Jamele Adams, Director of Equity, Inclusion and Belonging.

Superintendent Phelan

- Dr. Christine Lyons
    - Came from the Lexington Public Schools
    - Former Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning & Human Resources
    - Consultant across the State of Massachusetts
    - One of her first roles was an Elementary Curriculum Coordinator for Milton Public Schools at Pierce and Cunningham

Dr. Christine Lyons

- Thrilled to be here
- Hit the ground running in July
- Wonderful and busy office
- Have to give a shout out to Laurie Dunn and Charlene Roche for all of their hard work
- Received a warm welcome from everyone
- So nice to be part of a true team
- Looking forward to the next steps of processes and procedures

Superintendent Phelan

- James Malary
    - Municipal Finance Role in Arlington for the last several years
    - Also worked for the Town of Weymouth as the Director of Finance for the Mayor of Weymouth

    - Prior to that he has experience at the state level working within the Baker Administration

James Malary

- Thank you for giving me the opportunity to meet with Katie Blake back and June
    - Katie gave a good overview of the Business Office and the functions and operations of the Business Office
- Great group of people I am working with in the Business Office, Principals, Facilities, Transportation Department and the Athletic Director
- Look forward to continuing the work and closing out FY26
    - Balance Budget
    - Surplus balances in the Reserve Accounts
    - Looking to sustain the good work that was done in FY26
    - Establish FY27 budget
    - Continue the work on the growth path

Superintendent Phelan

- jamele adams
    - Came from Scituate Public Schools, DEIB Director for 6 years
    - Also a consultant and supports various districts across the commonwealth with challenges related to Equity
    - Member of the Brandeis University staff for 16 years with a number of Leadership roles
    - Had over 30-40 applied for the role and Jamele was at the top of the list

jamele adams

- Thank you, I am excited to be here
- Can't say enough about the welcome that I have received at every school
- I think the level of commitment the district has shown toward Equity and bringing people together is fantastic
- Connecting with Sires Rivers, Restorative Justice Coach has been incredible
    - Sires is like the Mayor
- It has been great connecting with all of the staff and scholars throughout different buildings
- Truly happy to be where I am supposed to be
- Look forward to the journey

The School Committee welcomed Dr. Lyons, James Malary and Jamele Adams.

MPS Prek-12 - Start of Year Enrollment

Enrollment as of June 30, 2026	**Initial Enrollment as of August 26, 2026**
Collicot: 644	Collicot: 623
Cunningham: 609	Cunningham: 606
Glover: 573	Glover: 576
Tucker: 440	Tucker: 418

Pierce: 987	Pierce: 983
MHS: 1,133	Milton: 1,183
Total: 4,386	Total: 4,389

MPS Transportation Update

- The district made an investment in changes to our transportation work as a result of feedback and experiences from the 2025/26 school year.
- The district responded to the challenge of too many PMS / MHS students on the bus waitlist.

The Response:

- Through the budget process we added one additional bus to reduce the Pierce and High School student waitlist
- Through discussion with our bus company we secured larger capacity buses

The Impact:

- The initial impact has been a reduced waitlist for our families in grades 6-12.
- The ***unintended*** impact of new drivers to Milton - who are able to drive the larger buses, but who are not familiar with the streets/routes - has resulted in late buses for our elementary families.
- The timing issues are being actively addressed.

MPS Transportation Data

Bus Registrations by Communicated Deadline:

- Students registered through powerschools **on time** for bus: 1,440
- As of July the "On time" registrations wait list: Route 5A total of 7 students 1.0 miles or less from home to school

Late Registrations and New Students:

- As of this 8/30 we have 60 students who registered after the deadline and are on a wait list
- 33 are PMS/HS that will be auto waitlisted (HS/PMS buses remain at capacity)
- The late **elementary** registrations are being worked on a weekly basis as there is capacity for these students

Milton Community Schools

Summer 2026

- Community Schools reported that they had a successful summer and are starting the 2026–27 school year with strong participation.
- Summer Camps experienced significant growth at both locations, with **243 campers at Camp Cunningham, an 11% increase from 2025, and 137 campers at Camp Tucker, a 57% increase**

School Year 2026/27

- **ASE and ESAP programs also continue to experience strong demand.** As the new

school year begins, ASE is at full daily capacity at Collicot, Cunningham, and Glover, with Tucker operating at a high level of enrollment as well. There are currently waitlists at Glover, Cunningham and Collicot.

- **Staffing continues to be an important area of focus.** Community Schools began recruiting in June to address positions that remained open from last year as well as vacancies resulting from staff departures.

Program Priorities & Continuous Improvement
Community Schools will continue to focus on strengthening the quality of the experience provided to children. The priorities include:

- Interest-Based Curriculum
- Staff Development & Empowerment
- CIT Leadership Program
- Inclusion & Individualized Support
- Positive Behavior & Community Building

MPS 2026/27 School Calendar

The School Committee voted the religious holidays for which school will not be in session during the 2026/27 school year - those holidays and dates are:

- Lunar New Year, February 5, 2027
- Eid-al-Fitr, March 10, 2027

On the website you will find the school calendar along with a comprehensive list and dates of cultural observances.
** Note - there will be school on these upcoming holidays:

- Rosh Hashanah begins Friday, September 11- Sunday, September 13
- Yom Kippur begins Sunday, September 20- Monday, September 21

** These were days that have been on the calendar in the past.

MPS Open House Dates

- Collicot, Wednesday, September 9
- Pierce, Thursday, September 10
- Milton High, Thursday, September 17
- Tucker, Wednesday, September 23
- Cunningham, Thursday, September 24
- Glover, Thursday, October 1

*** Building Principals will be communicating on all details to their families for these events.**

MPS Leadership Team Priorities 26-27

- Continue focus on the Classroom - 5 Priorities
- Continue to foster connection and collaboration with this leadership team
- Use Principal and Coordinator meetings for Teaching & Learning goals and priorities
- Build 2024 Evaluation Rubric Capacity for 2026/27

- Anti Bias in Hiring training for Leadership
- Leadership Team Development

MPS Priorities 26-27

1. Provide all students with robust and intentional Tier 1 instruction.
2. Increase use of data to inform instruction.
3. Increase rigor through high expectations and high supports in the classroom.
4. Take strategic action steps to ensure underperforming students achieve at grade level.
5. Continue to cultivate classroom and school climate and culture to lower absenteeism.

Superintendent Phelan had a discussion and answered questions from the School Committee regarding the Opening of School Update presentation slides.

5. **Facility Advisory Committee -** Member Varghese

Chair Loring

- Introduced Bob Mayhew - Director of Consolidated Facilities

Bob Mayhew

- Schools are all cleaned, custodians did an incredible job to get ready for the start of the school year
- It has been a busy summer
- Inspections and certifications are done, we are in good shape
- Wanted to thank the custodians and Principals for all of their hard work and cooperation

a. Cunningham/Collicot Library Update

Member Varghese

- Slides and link shared below, also available on the MPS website
- Discussed the timeline of the renovation process
- Shared all the photos of the space
- https://files-backend.assets.thrillshare.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/4813/Mps/92eecb30-9b36-49bf-906e-9a49c027c6f4/C_C_Library_update_Sept2_2026.pdf?disposition=inline
- Excited for the kids to use the new space

Superintendent Phelan

- This was a town and school collaboration project
- Wanted to recognize John Muir and his staff for all of their hard work during this project

6. **Chair's Report - Chair Loring**

Chair Loring

- MASC Conference is November 4th - November 6th
    - If any member would like to attend, please reach out and let me know
- State release attendance data for all schools and districts
    - Milton is the best performing district with attendance in the state
    - Incredible for Milton
    - If you break it down Pierce is #1 for attendance in the state

Superintendent Phelan

- This speaks to the culture and the climate of the schools
- Was a goal from our Leadership Team
- You have to be in school to learn
- We are thankful for the staff and the Principals

Dr. Carroll

- Hope we can get this information out to all the parents/guardians and the community
- Want everyone to understand the magnitude of success this is for Milton

Chair Loring

- Member Caldwell has volunteered to take the lead with the Student Services Advisory Task Force
- Have been in contact with Robert Milt and the SEPAC Committee
- Want more of a connection with School Committee
- Want to be more involved in the budget cycle as well
- Still working out logistics of meeting with SEPAC and School Committee

a. SY27 Goals

Chair Loring

- School Committee has met twice over the last couple of months in Governance Meetings
- Discussed goal setting and achieving goals
- Robust discussions
- Aligning goals with district priorities
- Shared the goals below and also available on the MPS website
    - https://files-backend.assets.thrillshare.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/4813/Mps/3a769a7a-9d19-4f29-a53e-040f4f1cd287/SY27-School-Committee-Goals---FINAL.pdf?disposition=inline

SY27 School Committee Goals

1. To ensure a rigorous and equitable education for Milton students and regularly evaluate progress toward FY27 Teaching & Learning priorities
    - Focus Areas:

        - Review district-wide performance data to monitor district progress on teaching and learning improvement for all students
        - Monitor implementation of the newly selected early literacy curriculum
        - Review middle school academic outcomes, rigor, and student readiness for high school to ensure all middle school students are well prepared for continued success
        - Review instructional related policies to ensure long-term stability within district instructional systems
2. To oversee a superintendent search process that is community driven and results in the selection of a high quality, long-term leader for the Milton Public Schools.
    - Focus Areas:
        - Identify the characteristics of Milton's next superintendent
        - Ensure robust community engagement process for the superintendent search
        - Provide regular communication on hiring process
        - Develop a superintendent onboarding plan to ensure a successful transition
3. To transparently steward taxpayer resources and sustain core services, manage FY27 to a balanced budget and develop an FY28 budget that advances district priorities in partnership with town boards and the Milton community.
    - Focus Areas:
        - Develop a high impact FY28 budget that supports aligning funding with district priorities
        - Review district revolving accounts policies to ensure long-term financial stability for the district, including a review of the district's fee schedule
4. To create a welcoming, equitable district where every student and staff member thrives and DEIB is embedded across all School Committee governance work.
    - Focus Areas:
        - Review existing district policies and protocols around addressing incidents of bias, racism and discrimination and establish a review of data related to these incidents
        - Review district residency policy and protocols and define the data elements to accurately track, analyze, and evaluate the equitable application of the residency policy

Member Caldwell

- Will we be checking in and reviewing the process throughout the year on the goals?

Chair Loring

- Yes, it depends on the calendar throughout the school year and when data would be available
- It is an ongoing conversation within this group
- Can always add items to the agenda

Dr. Carroll

- Could help to add a check in similar to a Governance Meeting

Chair Loring

- Yes, next Governance Meeting will be in October and we can check in on the goals

Member Varghese

- Subcommittees will also be doing the work

Dr. Hutto made a motion to approve the SY27 School Committee goals as presented.
Second: Dr. Carroll
Vote: 6-0-0

7. **Policy Subcommittee Update -** Member Caldwell

Member Caldwell - Chair of Policy Subcommittee

- Thanked Member Varghese for her work over the past two years
- Set meeting dates and a cadence
- Identified policies that we will need to work on immediately
- Working with guidance from the Governor's Office on the PROTECT Act
- PROTECT Act is an act promotion rule of law, oversight, trust and equal constitutional treatment
- Requires K to 12 schools to have a written procedures for interacting with officers engaged in civil law enforcement, including federal immigration enforcement
- There is deadline so this will be our priority
- Then we will move onto the Residency Policy
- I was also appointed as the liaison for the Working Group

8. **Superintendent Search Committee -** Dr. Carroll

Dr. Carroll

- At our last meeting The School Committee approved partnering with HYA as our firm for the Superintendent search
- This past Friday, the Search Committee met with the two HYA consultants
    - George Perry and Caryn Shaw
- Went over the logistics of what to expect as the next steps in the process
- We will be meeting with HYA as a full School Committee on September 16th prior to our regular meeting
    - Official kick off planning meeting
- George Perry and Caryn Shaw will work with us in detail through the scope of the search process
- Will be using our conversations of the meeting to make some important decisions on how we will be proceeding
- How will we be structuring different aspects of the search
- Discuss time frame

- Determining together what are stakeholders in the community and the district can expect for their opportunities for them to engage in the process
- Will provide more information following the meeting on September 16th
- Process will be very active through January, when we hope to select our new Superintendent
- George Perry and Caryn Shaw asked us to consider what are the different community groups that we want to ask HYA to include in specific community engagement focus groups
- Will be looking for us to provide them with a list groups that they would host special focus groups and to invite (SPEPAC, PTO's, MARC, CDM)
- Will also be open community sessions and MPS staff
- Once concluded, HYA will deliver us with a report that will synthesize all of the input they have received from the stakeholders
    - Based on all the input they they will receive and analyzed
- Survey's, 1:1 and focus groups
- HYA will present this report to us at a regular School Committee Meeting
- I will be working with Stephanie O'Keefe on a landing page on our website for the Superintendent search
    - A way to keep everyone informed

9. **School Building Committee -** Dr. Hutto

Dr. Hutto

- Met on August 24th
- One major topic on the agenda to discuss
    - The Designer Selection under the MSBA approved project
- The town of Milton has expressed interest in purchases the Laboure and the land it sits on
- All of that discussion is hypothetical and pending
- The core School Building Project at Gile Road is proceeding
    - Project has been accepted under the MSBA Program
    - School Building Committee has done a few important things
        - Select an OPM, which we did over the summer
            - That Group PMA - has been an OPM for School Building Project over a dozen times all over the state and will be guiding us through the process
        - Next step is that we select a designer/architect
            - The designer selection process is a public access that is controlled by MSBA
            - PMA has solicited interest from designers
            - In total will be 13 people on the panel (10 will be appointed by MSBA and 3 will be appointed by Milton)
            - Milton (Select Board, School Committee and the Superintendent (or his or her designate)
            - Public Voting and scoring process
- Tonight we will vote to appoint somebody to the Designer Select Board

- I recommend that we appoint Chair Loring
    - Chair Loring has been involved in the School Building Project for a long time

Chair Loring
- Last night at the Select Board Meeting, they selected Glenn Hoffman as their appointee
- Sean O'Rourke is the Superintendent designate

a. Designer Selection Board Appointment

Dr. Hutto made a motion that the Committee vote to approve Mark Loring as the School Committee's representative to the MSBA designer selection panel for the Milton school building project.
Second: Dr. Carroll
Vote: 6-0-0

10. Approval of Minutes

Dr. Carroll made an edit under the Superintendent Search.

Dr. Hutto made a motion to approve the School Committee meeting minutes of August 19, 2026 as edited.
Second: Member Qiu
Vote: 6-0-0

Dr. Hutto
- Since our last meeting, the following Warrants have been approved
    - #8 dated August 27, 2026 in the amount of $368,846.97
    - #9 dated September 3, 2026 in the amount of $536,416.57

11. Next Meeting Agenda Items
- Superintendent Search - HYA (and will post the separate meeting scheduled before the School Committee Meeting)
- SBC -possible Laboure update/discussion
- Budget Coordination
- Finance Update
- Policy Update
- School Building Update

12. Adjourn

Member Qiu made a motion to adjourn the School Committee Meeting.
Second: Dr. Carroll
Vote: 6-0-0

The School Committee adjourned at 9:09pm.