

**Milton Academy Upper School Parents' Association**  
**Meeting Agenda**  
**October 15, 2019, 7pm**

**Upper School's Parents' Association Executive Committee Members Present:**

- Leah Goldberg
- Lee Peterson
- Shadi Farokhzad

**Featured Speakers:**

Caroline Sabin - English Department Chair

Rob McGuirk - History Department Chair

**President's Welcome - Leah Goldberg, President**

Meeting was called to order at 7:01pm

**I. Communications Update:**

Social media accounts are live and up and running.

Instagram: miltonuspa

Facebook: milton academy upper school parents association

**II. Caroline Sabin, English Department Chair**

The English department is currently under review. Most other departments have already been reviewed. The basic structure of reviews consists of first a talk among teachers in the department to evaluate their department. Then they invite a visiting team to review the department. The team consists of teachers and academics in the field of English. They will then follow up with set of 3-4 goals and recommendations for the future. Visitors will be coming in November and then again in the winter.

Caroline listed a few things that will be reviewed, specifically the reading assigned, summer reading, the writing assigned, progression of curriculum, and the grading policy. They are also concerned about the grading policy and how to get the most out of kids without crushing them.

Some of the areas that Caroline believes we need to improve are: determining good reading (reading strategy); exposing kids to all genre of readings; attempting more creative writing; and expanding writing of personal narratives.

**III. Rob McGuirk, History Department Chair**

This is Rob's 3rd year as Chair of the History Department. The History Department offers a variety of different courses as well as social sciences courses such as American Government and Politics, and Economics.

**IV. Questions and Comments**

-Question about elective History courses and advising freshmen and sophomores on their History course selection. Rob answered that they depend on advisors to guide the students in course planning. He is interested in reaching out to the middle school, possibly in 8th grade, to start the advising process about History course options.

-Question about goals and outcome the History Department has for kids graduating from Milton. Rob answered he hopes that they develop into clear and critical thinkers, analyze and write research papers like historians.

-Question: Are there half courses in History? The department offers one half course (meets two times a week), and many semester courses (meets four times a week.)

-Question on grading inconsistencies in the English department, with some teachers allowing do-overs. Caroline answered that it is hard to have a consistent grading policy but very important and a goal they work towards.

-Question on potential scheduling changes in the Upper School and how they will that impact History Department? Rob answered that it is not clear yet. They will make adjustments when needed.

-Question on difference between US History course offered for Sophomores vs Junior/Seniors. They separated the class because of age but the material and content is the same. Older students have longer research papers. Same faculty teach both classes. 9 sections of sophomores and 6 of juniors/seniors this year.

-Question on any special courses being offered for 2020 election? No, but History classes will be discussing the elections as current events in their classes. They are interested in organizing a balanced speaker to discuss the elections.

-Question: Does Milton English prepare well for AP English exam? Caroline said that the students are very well prepared for the writing component of the exam. There is also a portion of the AP exam which students should spend some time preparing for on their own. It's best to take it at the end of junior year or senior year.

-Question on mentoring of new teachers at Milton. Caroline said that there is a formal mentoring program that pairs mentors and mentees. They meet weekly and have opportunities to observe one another's classes, and other classes. In addition, department chairs also evaluate new teachers, in the 1st year and 3rd year. There are 3 classroom visits and access to student feedback.

-Question on History trips abroad. There are 2 possibilities, one to Jordan and one to Poland.

**V. Review of Annual Calendar and Upcoming PA Events - Leah Goldberg**

- All upcoming PA events were announced and updated on calendar.
- New event on November 11 - Rod Skinner, Director of College Counseling will be available for questions, no prepared remarks. Open to all classes. 8-9am in Straus.
- Still trying to work on recording meetings.
- PA will be hosting a reception after the winter concert. This is a new event for the PA.
- Special Panel Event on March 3rd with Todd Bland, David Ball, and Indu Singh. Cocktail reception to follow.

**VI. Parents' Independent School Network** - Virginia Putnam

- Recent PIN meeting on Oct 2nd at Beaver Country Day School. Caroline McGuire was guest speaker and discussed ADHD and executive functioning.
- Next meeting, Fri, Oct. 18 at Thayer.

**VII. Middle School PA Speaker Series** - Leah Goldberg

- The Middle School PA will be hosting "Vaping, Nicotine, and Marijuana-What Parents Need to Know" on Nov. 7 at 8am, Straus.
- Lecturer: Dr. Elizabeth Booma, Chief of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at Newton-Wellesley Hospital
- Upper school parents are invited to attend.

**VIII. Faculty and Staff Appreciation Day** - Leah Goldberg

- Event held on Feb. 12 (set-up on the 11th)
- Committee Meeting next Tues, 10/22 at 7pm; all are welcome to join the planning committee.

**IX. Next USPA Meeting** - Tuesday, November 19th at 7pm

- Featuring Julie Seplaky and Gregg Reilly

Meeting adjourned at 8:05pm