

SUPPORTING YOUTH SUPPORTING COMMUNITY



***How can we all make Milton
a healthy place for young people
to live, learn, work, and play?***

Nute Middle High School

October 25, 2014

Everyone welcome!

Welcome and thank you for joining today's conversation ~

We look forward to your questions, concerns, ideas, and hopes regarding how best to support the young people of Milton to grow, thrive, and succeed. We believe that a strong community needs strong youth, and our youth need to be supported by all of us, whatever hats we wear in Milton and its schools.

Today's community conversation is part of a comprehensive effort by the Milton School District to engage the entire town, including Milton Mills, in creating the most healthy and positive environment possible for both young and old. Our focus is on young people, those who attend our schools now and in the future, and who will serve as future leaders here and across the world. This project has been funded by the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services.

Today's conversation has been designed by New Hampshire Listens in partnership with SAU 64 and an advisory committee of staff, parents, community members, and students.

This guide is the same for all participants and facilitators. The facilitators will help guide the conversation but we are all responsible for making sure the group is productive. Thank you!

Schedule at a Glance

8:30 AM	Pancakes and signing in
9:00	Welcome and overview
9:20	Small group conversations
11:30	Small group summary reports
11:50	Next steps

Please fill out the evaluation – it helps us to know more and get better!

12:00	Closing
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What is New Hampshire Listens?

New Hampshire Listens is a civic engagement initiative of the Carsey School of Public Policy at the University of New Hampshire. NH Listens works to strengthen New Hampshire communities by helping citizens participate directly in discussions about policies that affect their daily lives. Established in 2011, we engage state residents in local, regional, and statewide conversations on a broad range of topics to bring about informed, innovative solutions to complex issues. At the core of our work, we organize fair, nonpartisan discussions throughout the state, help communities establish their own local Listens organizations, and train facilitators for public engagement. If you are interested in more information, we look forward to you being in touch with us. We are always looking for thoughtful facilitators and local contacts in NH communities. Find us at: www.NHListens.org .



Detailed Outline

8:30 Registration and Refreshments

- Welcome and sign in at registration table
- Please find your small group circle to meet your facilitator and fellow participants. *Please take a few minutes to review the background information starting on page 6.*

Please note: We are delighted to have this event covered by the press and local bloggers and want to balance that with a participant's ability to express an incomplete or experimental thought as a part of this process. We respectfully request that all representatives of the news media (formal and informal) ask permission to tape, photograph, identify, or quote an individual participant directly. We are happy to answer any questions about this request.

9:00 Welcome and Overview of the Conversation

- Welcome from Superintendent Michael Tursi
- NH Listens Moderator: Michele Holt-Shannon

The goal of this conversation is to get informed together and to share our ideas, hopes, concerns, and suggestions for the best ways to support youth in Milton so they can all succeed and so that our community benefits.

- This conversation is...
 - Designed to focus on what is important to you related to the well-being of the youth of Milton. Our purpose is to advise our public officials, community leaders, school staff, school board, and the whole community about steps we can take together to create a positive, caring environment for our young.
 - Designed for participants to be here the whole time (please do what you need to do to be most present: Feel free to take a break or step outside for a phone call if needed).
 - About a constructive focus and looking forward to desired actions and solutions.
 - Intended to increase input and information on complex decisions being made by our community leaders.
 - Organized to allow the greatest possible time for everyone to both speak and listen, which is why we use small facilitated groups where ideas can be explored, differences understood, and preferences for action expressed.
- Group agreements for a productive conversation...
 - Share "air time"
 - If you disagree, consider asking a question rather than arguing to prove your point
 - It's OK to disagree, but don't personalize it. Stick to the issue, not the person who is disagreeing with you
 - Speak up if the process doesn't seem fair
 - Speak for yourself, not for others and not for an entire group (use "I" statements)
 - Personal stories stay in the group unless we all agree we can share them outside of the group
 - We all share responsibility for making the group productive

- Be respectful and use respectful language
- Respect the facilitator's role
- Listen first...

9:15

Introductions in small groups

- Your small group has a neutral facilitator whose role is to:
 - Help with the process and keep time
 - Serve as a reminder of our agreements to be fair and respectful
 - Make sure everyone gets a chance to participate, and
 - Record key information for the Summary Report
- Reminder: Your group will need someone to **report out** to the large group at the end.
- Introductions: Please share...
 - Your name
 - A hat or two you wear in the Milton or Milton Mills community
 - A brief thought about what brought you out this morning...

9:30

Community Values

- What do you value most about the Milton community?
- What role do young people have in preserving what is best about Milton and Milton Mills?
- How can the values that are important to you be passed on to young people?

10:00

Information Review

Take the time to look over the information section related to Milton and its youth. For our purposes, we will be asking, "*what do you notice?*" or, "*what is most important to you about this information?*"

Take a few minutes to read and ask clarifying questions.

Brainstorm: To get started, spend time getting the most important issues on the table. Don't worry about the details at this point, just make sure the **primary issues have been named**. Again, *what do you notice* and *what is important to you regarding the Milton community and its young people?*

10:15

Key Questions and Priorities

Consider the framing question: *How can we all make Milton a healthy place for young people to live, learn, work, and play?*

Spend some time discussing the key issues and their importance to you. Keep in mind the values and information you have just been discussing.

It might be useful for **each person to speak briefly about their perspective and key questions**.

The following questions may be helpful to prompt your thinking (but you will likely not have time to address each one individually):

- What are the most important challenges facing our youth?
- What are the primary causes of those challenges?



- How can families, schools, businesses, town officials, and community leaders work together to create the most positive environment for young people?
- What changes could we make in our community, schools, recreation programs, health care practices, etc. to benefit young people?
- How can the adults in our community serve as mentors, role models, and resources for youth?
- How can we be sure our young people feel engaged and valued by our community?
- How can we engage the entire community, not just those here today, in our efforts to help young people feel safe, valued, and hopeful?

Spend time here exploring differences and commonalities in your group. What questions remain? Has anyone gained insights or new understandings? Any new ideas to note?

11:20 **Final Priorities**

Based on your group conversation, “*Are there any common-ground thoughts or ideas in this group? If so, what do we want to say at the end of the evening? If not, what diverse points of view do we want to convey?*”

A single consensus is not required, but if one emerges, or perhaps if the group wants to put forward two or three primary points of view, that is fine. These will represent your **key recommendations or findings**.

Your group will need to prioritize their top insights and/or recommendations to report out to the large group and *select someone to speak*. The reporting out should include no more than **two or three** specific statements. To arrive at this point, the group should take a step back and look for *both the unique ideas and those that seemed to recur*. Group ideas together that seem to be related, but don’t lose track of the unique ones.

The **written** small group report will convey a more complete view of your group’s ideas for the final report (this will be taken directly from the flip chart notes and will be included directly in the report as finalized by your group). You will likely not have time to represent **all** of your ideas in the large group report out (two minutes!).

11:40 **Reporting Out**

Each group will be asked to provide a VERY BRIEF summary of their most important findings, concerns or recommendations. If you are asked to speak for your group, please be brief and share what has been compiled *by your group*, including common ground and divergent views. (You will have two minutes!)

11:55 **Wrap up comments**

- Please fill out the evaluation – it matters to us! We read these and always work to incorporate your feedback. Thank you!
- Next steps

12:00 **Closing**

Thank you for participating!



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

MILTON COMMUNITY PROFILE

Source: NH Department of Employment Security

<u>Total Population</u>	<u>Milton</u>	<u>County</u>
2012	4,601	124,119
2010	4,598	123,143
2000	3,940	112,676
1990	3,690	104,348
1980	2,438	85,324
1970	1,859	70,431
Male: 2,382		Female: 2,184
Under age 5		200
Age 5 to 19		1,052
Age 20 to 34		780
Age 35 to 54		1,462
Age 55 to 64		466
Age 65 and over		606
Median Age		38 years (NH=41)
Educational Attainment, population 25 years and over		
High school graduate or higher	90.0%	(NH=91.4%)
Bachelor's degree or higher	12.7%	(NH=33.4%)
Individuals below the poverty level	10.8%	(NH=8.4%)

LARGEST BUSINESSES PRODUCT/SERVICE EMPLOYEES ESTABLISHED

Index Packaging	Foam packaging	120	1968
Milton School District	Education	77	
Iron Mountain	Document storage	20	
Seacoast Boatbuilders	Boat manufacturing	14	1994



Appendix B

Milton Community Conversation – Small Group Notes from October 25, 2014

Group A

Facilitator: Cara Cargill

Community Values

- Close knit
- Spread out
- Rural living
- Potential for pulling together
- Trust
- Small school
- Small town
- Courtesy
- Diversity
- Rallying together in times of need
- Opportunities for involvement
- Small community
- Supportive schools
- Efforts to change things

Role of Young People

- Core group of youth who are strongly connected to the town (mural w/ history)
- Think of themselves as part of the community and how to make it better for everyone
- Think about future for everyone, giving back
- Reserve the familiarity of the town but also keep it moving forward
- Responsibility is know the history so when they're the leaders they know the past
- Involvement
- Memory, preserve the past
- Preserve the community
- Come with solutions
- Engage with community members, school, parents
- Community service hours
- Empower youth to share their voice, ownership, lead
- Advocate for themselves – what's important?
- Share talents
- Involvement

How can you pass these on to young people?

- See adults be involved, role model
- Explicit anti-bullying campaign

- Pride – ownership in school and town
- Community events to reach more kinds than national honor society
- Platform for kids to express their own values
- Families are too busy, family dinners, conversations
- Be willing to have a conversation with them, engage them
- Empathy
- Things in town that meet their needs: fun and recreation
- Demonstrate/do by example

Primary Issues

- % of kids who felt they mattered was too low; not seen in school – effects other statistics
- Hopelessness, suicide more concerning than behaviors (that attitude)
- Graph shows good trend
- Ruralness influences use
- Bad news may be pushed by small population – but one student also can have big impact negative or positive
- Growth in population, capacity of grocery stores, doctors, etc resources
- Fragmented community not coordinated for kids can't see that
- Youth disconnected from planning
- Data not surprising
- 2012 vs high – what changed?
- Parents and families not involved, responding enough – education happening (which is helping?)
- To change kids, change parents?
- Poverty – home life issues
- Parents being examples – cyclical (or not)

Most Important Challenges Facing Youth

- Not in our community attitude
- Communication to families is lacking
- How do we promote and establish a healthy mindset, safe place?
- Need leaders for programs and engagement from the youth
- Problems from families begin too busy – transportation
- Lack of access to services
- Public transit (lack of)
- Support youth by supporting parents/families
- Families don't know about fuel assistance etc – need to have this information beyond newspaper etc
- Reluctance to use welfare if others will find out
- Town coordination for services (bus)
- Exposure to risk at very young age

- Not DARE officer (but HAVE youth to youth)
- Need for community groups/actives (cub scouts, fire department)
- Access to mental health services, counselor in schools
- How to connect kids to mental health services?
- Disconnect between access and small town connection, close knit community
- Low use of bus – communication issues (pride – ie admitting the need for help)
- Communication between school and families
- Communication and connection –what clubs? What’s available?
- Directory w/ contact info – easy to use
- Kids spread the word – give them ownership

Connections between schools

- What can be put in place to help kids feel that they matter?
- Student selectmen
- Have youth at town meetings, school meetings
- Have selectmen meetings at the school
- Create incentives – credit assignments
- After school programs in middle school
- Youth center needed
- Community service houses and the community facilitating that – consistent standard would implement town values and they’d be involved.
- Reality of available resources
- Undertaking first steps but everything takes time
- Guidance counselors are in schools, just started advising groups
- Students feel connected to teachers
- Used to have sports club running activities with older kids for younger ones
- Now rec department runs programs for kids
- Change is occurring but there is a lack of financial resources
- Connect to town government, budget office
- Consistent leadership
- Having police in schools, community, is good
- Only a small group of parents running activities and there is only so much they can do
- Need support from government for public education
- Need link between PTA, Sports Clubs etc – but issues of a small group of people
- Success brings more people

How to facilitate school/parent/student

- Communication for different age groups
- Who is responsible for the dialogue currently and who should be?
- Disconnect with parents

- Find a between balance in the communication 0 what's the best way
- Proactive on parents part to go online – not everyone has internet (folders went home in elementary school)
- Avenues of communication
- Transition parents and kids to high school

Final priorities:

- Communication of community groups
 - Cohesion
 - Bridging
 - Organizing
- Build on what's positive with youth
 - find value in the community
 - High schools E.L.O. is building capacity and engaging youth
- Need for youth center and activities
 - Youth employment
 - Separate from school
 - Need for town to advocate youth

Group B

Facilitator: Cyndi Paulin

Community Values:

- Volunteerism
- All season rec opportunities – environment and organized
- Value of small rural community – connected
- People pitch in – have your back (but do know your business)
- Welcoming, inclusive, value all – build on/reach out those less connected
- History and roots
- Efforts working together to support kids and grow what's there pleased positive direction (in school)
- Something to build on outside school
- Town us school “feeling”
- Good on table

Information Review and Brainstorm

What notice? Important to you?

- Cigg, alcohol, marijuana use
- What is parents influence?
- Milton compared to similar towns
- Sadness and suicide – bullying? “secret” bullies rumors)
- What's going on?

- Enrollment rates steady
- Fewer young people
- Career prep (trades, vocational) important and college prep- lower % bachelor degrees
- Important know what HIS offers
- Grading – effects how kids learn
- Low science prof. alarming – some kids not interested if forced d doesn't work
- A lot of kids use drugs and alcohol
- Other kids feel unsafe to speak up
- Talk about in schools- post pics on social media.

Key Questions/Priorities

How make Milton a healthy place for young people to live, learn, work and play

- Volunteerism – require kids to volunteer/community service
- Coordinator – a leader
- What structure needed for parents to volunteer
- Ask kids what they want or need – how we know talents/ interests
- Reduction that allows kids to tap into their own passions, some self – direction not just prescribed
- Community kids need positive influence – adults
- Community involvement
- Middle/ elementary – after school – mix arts, music, building, chorus, cooking, gardening etc!
- What are kids learning that could be connected together things in town
- Gym/physical movement year round all ages – winter big gap
- Costs- volunteers, coordinating organizers, what can be done in a regular school time.
- Use other community spaces (Emma Ramsey Center, Lockhart field, Library, Lawn at School, Town beach and baseball field)
- Communication – multiple ways – purple paper, email, Facebook, Milton gazette
- Inclusion
 - Free food – packed attendance
 - Child care
 - Evening – people work away
 - Older students as volunteers and leaders
 - Invite other kids to volunteer that aren't in a group – hidden leaders/treasures
 - Go where people are
- Build on momentum – if want “wrap around” –need coordinator
- Been huge improvement communication school to parents – expand to community
- Summer programs O like to see expanded to school year – can parents, community adults volunteer?
- PTA – good energy – compare and build on/coordinate at middle school – coordinate with REC not compete

- Community center? – People like idea – be hard to combine with fire station?

Learned:

- Want some things
- Surprised – sadness/suicide/drug levels
- Variety of perspectives increases understanding

Final Priorities

- Participation and volunteerism
- Communication – school to town and school to parents
- How town and school work together – be a casserole
- Suicide/sadness/inclusion – how have safe place for support? How open conversation about it but kids feel safe – confidential as needed.
- After school needed - space – community center

Group C

Facilitators: Tanya Rochette and Kathy Bleckman

What do you value most about the Milton Community?

- People help each other
- Low crime rate
- Affordable living
- Tremendous police force
- Tremendous recreation department
- Students highly respect their teachers
- Students feel they have a voice
- Rural
- A lot of peer support
- Dedication of community workers wanting to make a difference

What role for young people have in preserving what is best about Milton and Milton Mills?

- Enjoy above values
- Feel safe
- Shared responsibilities- community service
- Appreciation
- Be good role models
- Let everyone know they're values
- Learn Milton's history
- Increase youth involvement
- Strengthen community connections across all ages

How can these values that are important to you be passed on to young people?

- Creating a rec center
- Continue to staff fulltime youth2youth after grant
- Need professional and community members
- Paid and volunteer
- Role-shadowing
- Empower youth through meaningful active involvement
- Local civic engagement
- Civics classes
- ELO – extended learning opportunities – continue to fund

Milton – Review Info – Milton Community and its Young People

What did you notice?

- 23% of population is school aged
- DARE program?
- Lack of activities “boredom”
- Community is very routine (predictable)
- Transient families are not connected
- Poverty level is higher than state average
- Need for more community safety education

What is most important to you about this information?

- What percentage of this population engaged in extra-curricular activities?
- Would like to expand on data provided to see percentage involved vs users
- What times of day?
- Where?
- Environments

How can we all make Milton a Healthy place for young people to live, learn, work and play?

- Help children live a purpose-driven life
- Boredom
- Setting goals for the future
- Many community members are actively seeking solutions
- Create the culture of purpose-driven life at home
- Need more avenues to share – rec department, social media, public library
- Selectmen and Board of Ed work together
- Community action and social events and good
- Increase sense of recognition “I noticed...”

- Milton Matter Coalition
- Engage the youth – maybe families will follow
- Community calendars need to be linked

Top 5 Priorities

- Help to create a sense of purpose for the youth
- Create avenues for youth to have open dialogue and take action
- Increase communication of what is available to do in the community
- Increase extra-curricular involvement at younger level
 - Peer to peer clinics
 - Mentoring
 - technology
- Music, art, sports, Transportation needs to be provided

Group D

Facilitator: Leslie Bos

Community Values –

- We are in the middle of nowhere by choice
- Lack of communication
- Promoting volunteerism
- Value students voice – they have great ideas
- Great project – there isn't much for the youth to do here
- Historic buildings restorations
- NH Farm Museum
- Community involvement = Ownership
- Small community – tightly knit – connected
- Beautiful community

Key Questions and Priorities

- Don't provide transportation for school sports/events
- Mentor type program in place but not effective – informal, roles not identified, not supported
- Fire department youth volunteer program
- Some actives are advertised by word of mouth only
- Don't have parent support groups or easily accessible resources

Final Priorities

- Collaboration between town/school/community
- Develop mentors/advisors for senior projects
- Develop “volunteer pool”
- Coordinate all community calendars

- Develop strong communication network
- Opportunities for youth pre and post school
- Develop parent resources
- Make info available to all in community (not all have internet access.)
- Connecting youth with all ages of community
- Thinking outside of the box to involve youth (helping seniors example rake or company – doesn't require funding.)

Information Review

- Depression/hopeless percentage is very concerning
- Alarming percentages
- Small community that has stopped working together as a small community

Most important challenges

- Expand recreation opportunity – no facilities or no facilities in certain parts of town
- Very little for youth to do in community
- Nothing available pre or post school for children
- Not a large volunteer “pool” available
- Most parents/adults commute to outside of town
- After school programs suffers funding issues
- Develop peer to peer groups to help with student support
- Sports areas deteriorate and are not maintained/repared
- Funding major challenges
- Community group to focus on available groups
- Very active elementary PTO – NO PTO at middle school level
- Limited “information vehicle” to exchange information between town/school
- Current community type Facebook sometimes “grumpy toned”- change to positive with school/youth input
- Organize community groups to focus on pre/post school activities/facilities
- Need to coordinate calendars - town and school calendars often conflict (painfully)
-ex budget meetings on same night as open house...
- Develop town/school “E. News”
- Town and school websites should share information
- Library possible “connect” between town and school
- Cumberland farms only place “everyone” seems to go
- Only honor society is required to do volunteerism – possibly expand to other students
- Student interns at farm museum
- Need mentors with specialized expertise to expand ELO, also would expand opportunities for general student population (build database of people willing to serve as specialty mentors)
- Survey students- what areas would you like to learn about that are not offered

- Have students participate in similar group conversation on school day
- Student Rep. reporting at select board meetings
- Civic class required to attend school board meetings - expand
- Town develop service projects that youth community could provide school making volunteerism mandatory
- Need parenting resources (classes, resources)
- Kids would like to learn about community as long as it is internship.
- Need to integrate town/school rec department
- Community center
- Students could offer classes to town (adults) on smart phone/iPad/kindle.... Bring classes to senior luncheon/library
- Communication network
- Base ELOs around restoration Project (Damon House)
- Many town restoration projects need funding and would benefit with youth volunteers

Appendix C

How NH Listens Collects and Reports Findings

NH Listens bases this kind of community development work on small-group facilitated dialogue (typically eight to twelve participants per group) that produces specific findings. Depending on the topic, the findings might be at a more general level, articulating broad sets of values or criteria for decision making, or quite specific recommendations, such as concrete steps for action. Whether a dialogue is constructed as a one-time event that stretches over several hours or multiple events occurring over several weeks, participants typically move through a four-stage process supported by the facilitator.

These stages include:

1. Introductions and personal stories about how participants relate to the focus topic of the dialogue (including their prior experiences with and opinions about the topic)
2. Review of the available data on the topic to ensure common, comparable levels of knowledge among participants
3. Analysis of the topic and its multiple dimensions, leading to selection by the group of a small number of key issues (three to four) that serve as the basis for subsequent discussion from which the group generates concrete actions and recommendations
4. In-depth discussion of the selected key issues and articulation of a final set of views, values, or recommended actions directed at relevant decision makers

Throughout the dialogue, facilitators, and participants document the conversation on large flipcharts and identify recurring statements or themes. That is, the information that is gleaned from each small group is inductively analyzed, moving from specific comments made by group members to general statements that represent the shared ideas and perspectives of the group. Both agreements and disagreements are recorded, to ensure that all points of view are heard and documented.