

NORTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Norton, Massachusetts

NORTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING

Date of School Committee Meeting: Monday, January 27, 2014

Location: Norton Middle School Library

Attending: Committee Members: Chairman Deniz Savas, Vice-Chairman Marge Werner, Mrs. Valerie Desmond, Mr. Phillip Lynch, and Mr. Andrew Mackie. Also present: Superintendent of Schools Joseph F. Baeta, Director of Operations and Finance Barry Nectow, Director of Curriculum and Instruction Jennifer O'Neill, Director of Pupil Personnel Services Jeanne Sullivan, Student Representatives Cassidy McDonald and Tyler McNeill.

Call to Order: Chairman Savas called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

Pledge of Allegiance:

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

MOTION: by Mrs. Werner to approve the minutes of January 6, 2014 Open Session

SECOND: by Mr. Mackie

VOTE: 5-0 in favor motion carries

Student Representatives Update:

The student representatives reported that it is officially the second semester now that exams are over. The wrestling team had an excellent season, and the DECA team has 21 students advancing to the state competition. The track team is in a good position to capture the Tri-Valley League title. The Math Honor Society has begun tutoring, which is very helpful for many students.

Norton Middle School iPads Grant Project – Mr. Mike Kramer:

The iPad project at the middle school was started with a grant from Norton Cable. The grant provided ten iPads, ten Survivor cases, three years of Apple Care, one Apple TV, a five gigabyte storage device, one extreme wireless airport, and a charging cabinet for the iPads. After the first few lessons in the Technology Education lab Mr. Kramer decided to expand the piloting opportunities to other subjects. The iPads are introduced as a tool to enhance lessons. Several students were present to explain their projects. Some students used the iPad to create and expand information by using QR codes. Students in Grade 6 ELA found a unique way to share information by creating a “movie trailer” type format. They were able to utilize the iMovie app, which is just one of 65,000 educational apps available to them. The TV Media Club, ELA classes, math lab, and physical education department have also piloted the iPads over the last three months. This has been a very positive experience for all involved and was accomplished with just the ten iPads. Mr. Kramer said they could not thank Norton Cable enough for the generous grant.

Vote on High School Curriculum and Program Changes – Mrs. Jennifer O’Neill and Mrs. Megan Lafayette:

Mrs. Tanya Benoit, Science Academic Coordinator, gave the Committee an overview of the proposed changes to re-align the science program for the incoming freshman students. She stated that the current science curriculum is Biology centered. The goal is to broaden student exposure to more Physics and Chemistry coursework. Currently all of the freshman students take Physical Science, which is a combination of Physics and Chemistry. The new proposal will have the majority of students take Introductory Physics in Grade 9. Students in Grade 8 will have the opportunity to take a science placement exam prior to course selection, which could place them in Honors Biology for their freshman year. The goal is to help students broaden their science foundation and align more closely with the new state science curriculum. This change will also allow students two opportunities to take a science MCAS test, both in Physics and Biology (after one year). Mr. Mackie expressed concern that this should be connected to the middle school and that the MCAS science scores at the middle school need improvement. Dr. Baeta has reviewed the changes.

The Committee wished to take individual votes on each program change.

MOTION: by Mrs. Desmond to approve the changes to the Science Course of Studies

SECOND: by Mr. Lynch

VOTE: 4-1 in favor motion carries

Mrs. Mary Taylor, Math Academic Coordinator, proposed two changes in the math department for the next school year. The first proposal would change the graduation requirements from three years of math to four, including requiring all students taking Algebra II. This change would align Norton High School with the recommendation of the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education. In order to make this requirement available for all students, the math department has designed two courses for Algebra II, the traditional model and a course that would span two years with more hands-on projects. In addition, Mrs. Taylor is proposing to change the double math requirement for incoming Grade 9 students that are enrolled in an Honors level math course. Data over the last several years has shown that these students are typically very successful and not always in need of the double math course in freshman year.

MOTION: by Mr. Mackie to approve the changes to the Mathematics Course of Studies

SECOND: by Mrs. Desmond

VOTE: 5-0 in favor motion carries

Ms. Nicole Nunes, NHS Wellness Teacher presented a proposal to change the physical education program at the high school, offering two years of an Integrated Health and Fitness curriculum to all students in Grades 9 and 10. This new course will split time between the classroom, gymnasium, and new fitness center teaching students essential adolescent health and wellness content. The proposal also includes additional options for students in Grades 11 and 12 with two new courses – Recreational Sports & Lifetime Activities and Team Sports. Upperclassmen will have the luxury of choice based on interest. The new programs will also allow for students that are actively engaged in Norton High School athletics, or an outside recreation, to receive credit for this once in their high school career.

MOTION: by Mr. Mackie to approve the changes to the Health & Wellness Course of Studies

SECOND: by Mrs. Werner

VOTE: 5-0 in favor motion carries

Vote on Middle School Roof Statement of Interest to MSBA:

The School Department requests approval to submit a Statement of Interest (SOI) to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) for the Norton Middle School Roof Repair Project. The SOI is the first step in applying for partial funding from the MSBA and is due to the MSBA by February 14th. Approval from the School Committee and Board of Selectmen is required. If the MSBA invites Norton into the program, the next step would be to prepare and submit a detailed feasibility study. This project could be one of the first to come before the new Permanent Building Committee.

Resolved: Having convened in an open meeting on January 27, 2014, prior to the closing date, the School Committee of Norton, Massachusetts, in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated _____ for the Norton Middle School located at 215 West Main Street, Norton, MA, which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category(s) for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future Priority 5 – roof deficiency and failure causing water leaks and periphery damage, at times disrupting the delivery of programing to students; and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the Town to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

MOTION: by Mr. Mackie to approve the Middle School Roof Statement of Interest to MSBA

SECOND: by Mrs. Werner

VOTE: 5-0 in favor motion carries

Vote on Town Meeting Article for Middle School Roof:

The School Department requests approval to submit an article to the Annual Town Meeting in the amount of \$100,000, for funds for a feasibility study to repair the roof at the Middle School. This article assumes that the Statement of Interest is accepted and the district is invited to submit a feasibility study. If the SOI is not accepted the article will be withdrawn.

ARTICLE

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate, borrow or transfer from available funds, \$100,000, to be expended under the direction of the Norton School Committee, for funds for a feasibility study to repair the roof at the Norton Middle School, 215 West Main Street, Norton, MA, for which feasibility study the Town may be eligible for a grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority. The MSBA's grant program is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need, as determined by

the MSBA, and any costs the Town incurs in connection with the feasibility study in excess of any grant approved by and received from the MSBA shall be the sole responsibility of the Town.

MOTION: by Mr. Mackie to approve the Town Meeting Article for the middle school roof

SECOND: by Mr. Lynch

VOTE: 5-0 in favor motion carries

Articles for Special Town Meeting:

At this time the Superintendent has no recommendations for consideration.

Vote on Teacher Evaluation Process:

The Norton Teachers Association has ratified the Educator Evaluation Agreement. Very minimal changes have been made to the original document. Any date changes can be handled by the working group. Mr. Savas asked for a minor change, which would have to be approved by the working committee.

MOTION: by Mr. Mackie to approve the Teacher Evaluation Process

SECOND: by Mr. Lynch

VOTE: 5-0 in favor motion carries

FY '15 Budget Update – Mr. Barry Nectow:

The Superintendent is seeking feedback from the Committee on the draft budget proposal presented at the January 6th School Committee Meeting. It is still a working budget and the Committee will finalize it at its meeting on February 8th. A final vote will be taken at the February 10th meeting. Committee members are still interested in discussing local aid with our legislative representatives.

Superintendent Entry Plan:

Dr. Baeta discussed challenges and areas for improvement. He is working on fee structures and the school choice option and has a strong desire to acquire more iPads. The main message is to “build on what we have that’s great”.

Personnel:

Retirement: Kathleen Stejakoski, HAY Grade 5 Teacher , after 21 years with the district

New Hire: Julie Lach, HAY Grade 5 Teacher

Resignation: Tammy Gluchacki, NHS Educational Assistant

Appointment: Bob Bielawa, HAY Grade 4 Teacher, appointed to Interim Dean of Students
At HAY for remainder of the 2013-2014 school year

Other: Dr. Baeta discussed a placeholder for the Special Town Meeting for an article to fund start-up costs for full-day Kindergarten at JCS and LGN.

Adjourn:

MOTION: by Mrs. Desmond to adjourn
SECOND: by Mrs. Werner
VOTE: 5-0 in favor motion carries

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 P.M.

Documents and Other Exhibits used at Meeting:

- Norton High School Curriculum Changes
- Norton Middle School iPad Grant
- Statement of Interest – MSBA
- Educator Evaluation Agreement
- Transitional Entry Plan

NEXT MEETING DATES:

February 8, 2014, Budget Workshop Meeting, Superintendent’s Conference Room
February 10, 2014, Regular Meeting, Norton Middle School

Respectfully Submitted,
Joseph F. Baeta, Ed.D.
Secretary Pro Tem

Deniz Savas, Chairperson

Marge Werner, Vice Chairperson

Valerie Desmond

Phillip Lynch

Andrew Mackie