

NORTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Norton, Massachusetts
NORTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING

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NORTON TOWN CLERK
2021 JAN -4 P 1:18

Date of School Committee Meeting: September 24, 2020

Location: Remote Participation

Present: Committee Members: Chairperson Mrs. Carolyn Gallagher, Vice-Chairperson Deniz Savas, Mrs. Sheri Cohen, Mr. Dan Sheedy, ***Absent:*** Mrs. Kathleen Stern ***Also present:*** Superintendent of Schools Joseph F. Baeta, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Jennifer O'Neill, School Business Manager Matthew Wells, Director of Facilities Wade Lizotte, Technology Director Karen Winsper, Director of Pupil Personnel Services Vincent Cerce, Coordinator of Special Education Cassandra Russo, Student Representatives Zoe Duran and Malia Savas

Call to Order: Chairperson Gallagher called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and announced that the meeting was being video recorded.

Student Representatives Update:

Zoe Duran and Malia Savas reached out to the principals and received the following feedback about school openings:

JCS – There was a warm welcoming from the JCS PTO with balloons, sidewalk chalk art welcoming students and staff, and snacks were provided.

LGN – The kids were excited to be back at school and were getting used to being 6 feet apart.

HAY – The 4th graders are learning their way around the building. The 5th graders are being great role models, respective and responsible. The teachers and staff should be commended for all their hard work.

NMS – The staff is making this a fun new year by playing music and TV shows during lunch.

NHS - The students really enjoy eating outside where they can all be together. There are dots on the ground to keep social distancing. One-way hallways are different but everyone is doing a great job.

Update on Opening of Schools – Dr. Baeta:

Dr. Baeta thanked our Student Representatives and will reach out to them to talk about things they are hearing around the school.

He will be reaching out to remote choice and hybrid families to hold a meeting with the parents from each group in October.

A common theme is the appreciation for staff and students following protocol. It is noticeable that the buildings are at 50% capacity. There is excitement and positivity of students to be back at school.

LGN, HAY, and JCS had some changes in terms of pick-up and drop-off routes. The changes seem to have worked out to be positive.

Hybrid and full-digital learning is positive but it has had constructive criticism regarding communication and expectations of the students. He understands the pressure put on parents during these different times with remote learning. He is proud of our staff and students. The work of many have led us down a positive path. We will continue to work together to move in the right direction as a team to address these issues.

Chairperson Gallagher acknowledged that Dr. Baeta has led us to where we are at. His visibility is really present and parents know they can reach out to him. She thanked him and our staff.

Update on Norton Police Department / School Resource Officer (SRO) Program – Chief Clark

Dr. Baeta commented on how the schools have a positive relationship with the police department. We are all proactive to support families. It is encouraging to watch the day-to-day engagement with our resource officers by having them present in our buildings and interacting with our students. Thank you to Sergeant Jake Dennett, Officer Marc Robichaud and Chief Clark for this program.

Chief Clark updated the Committee about some organizational structures. The resource officers went back to patrol during school closings. He reported domestic violence had gone up while traffic accidents had gone down. He reported Project ALERT is active in the middle school. He is collaborating to prevent situations before they happen. A second resource officer was added last year. It is all about the safety and security for our kids and families. Sergeant Dennett is at the high school and Officer Robichaud is at the middle school. They have been well received and things are going well. Lockdown drills will be different this year. There will be more video classes and more patrol checks of the schools.

Members of the Committee commented on how much we value and respect the SRO Program. We are all part of a team to be proactive in supporting the students to make the best decisions. The Committee thanked the Police Department and our resource officers for all their work and support.

Dr. Baeta commented how he and Chief Clark discuss any needs and then the resource officers with their team get it done. On opening day of the schools, the police were checking the buildings and were very supportive. This makes the difference between what is happening in the world and what is happening in Norton. We have the Norton Opioid and Prevention in Education (NOPE) Program which was started by Chief Clark and the students named it NOPE. Dr. Baeta assured the Committee and the public that we are working towards re-educating students and not trying to put students away. We are all working towards educating kids on how to make good decisions.

Update on Massachusetts Partnership for Diversity in Education (MPDE) – Dr. Baeta:

Dr. Baeta thanked the members of our staff for presenting this and pushing it forward. MPDE has 30 districts recruiting and assisting to produce career opportunities for outstanding candidates of color in teaching, administrative, and support positions. We are committed to a goal to form relationships that will enhance staff diversity within our school districts. Karina Sallaway is the lead person for this. An understanding of multiple cultures will help our students transfer into the work force and college.

Update on Financial Concerns Related to COVID-19 – Matthew Wells:

Mr. Wells presented the Committee with spreadsheets regarding COVID expenditures and the funding sources. To date, \$2,772,250 is the total cost outside of the budget. If we stay in hybrid teaching, the expenses will increase in order to replenish our supplies and materials.

Dr. Baeta discussed the COVID leave absence requests and the federal regulations. He mentioned our Champions Program for childcare is available for families and staff.

Chairperson Gallagher expressed her appreciation for bringing this to the Committee's attention. From a budget perspective, hybrid consists of extra spending but it is all about the students and staff getting what they need for education.

Superintendent's Goals:

Dr. Baeta explained his goals towards teaching in technology, social and emotional learning, cultural proficiency and curriculum for 2020-2021. He noted in Goal #1 – Actions, the date stated October 1, 2020 will need to be changed to October 30, 2020. The goals are on record for the public and Committee to review and make comments. A vote will then be taken at the next meeting to accept the Superintendent goals.

Superintendent's Evaluation Review:

Chairperson Gallagher entered into public record the evaluation review:

Standard I: Instructional Leadership –Proficient
Standard II: Management and Operations – Exemplary
Standard III: Family and Community Engagement – Exemplary
Standard IV: Professional Culture – Exemplary

Overall Summative Performance – Exemplary

Members of the Committee commented on how they were fortunate to have such a collaborative evaluation. Dr. Baeta is absolutely a visible leader, he is appreciative and receptive for positive and constructive information, he has the ability to work with an underfunded budget, and how he can prioritize the needs of the district to support student learning. The Committee thanked him for leading the district.

MOTION: by Mr. Sheedy to approve the Evaluation Report of the Superintendent

SECOND: by Mrs. Cohen

VOTE: Roll Call: Dan Sheedy-yes; Sheri Cohen-yes; Deniz Savas-yes;
Carolyn Gallagher-yes; Kathleen Stern-absent 4-0 Motion Carries

***Discussion and Vote on Community Service Requirements for NHS Seniors –
Mr. Vincent Cerce:***

Mr. Cerce reported that most seniors are on target for graduation requirements except for community services of 50 hours. Staff has reached out to local agencies but due to COVID agencies are not accepting or needing assistance. Dr. Baeta informed the Committee that the

Health & Safety Committee postponed the NHS internship program. Mr. Cerce recommend waiving the requirement hours at this time.

Committee members noted they understand the challenge and pressure this is creating for the students but questioned if it is too early in the school year to make this decision. Since we do not know what we are dealing with, it is recommended to take the pressure off and remind them to do "Random Acts of Kindness."

MOTION: by Mr. Savas to Not Require for the Current 2021 Graduates Community Service Hours

SECOND: by Mrs. Cohen

ROLL CALL VOTE: Sheri Cohen-yes; Dan Sheedy-no; Deniz Savas-yes;
Carolyn Gallagher-yes; Kathleen Stern-absent 3-1 Motion Carries

Other Business:

- Dr. Baeta informed the Committee that there are several Minutes of the Meetings that need to signed and approved. He will get the minutes to the Committee and allow time for any changes that may need to be made. He will then post for a meeting for at least three members to attend to sign and approve the minutes.
- Northern Trust and TPC have donated \$15,000 to the school. They were not obligated to do this so we sincerely thank them for this donation. It will be divided amongst the schools and the funds will go directly to the students.

MOTION: by Mr. Savas to Adjourn Meeting

SECOND: by Mrs. Cohen

ROLL CALL VOTE: Dan Sheedy-yes; Sheri Cohen-yes; Deniz Savas-yes;
Carolyn Gallagher-yes; Kathleen Stern-absent 4-0 Motion Carries

The meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Next Meeting Date: Thursday, October 8, 2020

Documents and Other Exhibits Used at Meeting:


- Massachusetts Partnership for Diversity in Education (MPDE)
- COVID-19 Total Cost Increase To Date
- FY2020 and FY2021 Financials To Date
- F21 COVID Leave
- Superintendent Goals 2020-2021
- Superintendent Summative Evaluation Report

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

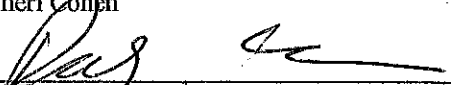


Carolyn Gallagher, Chairperson

Deniz Savas, Vice-Chairperson



Sheri Cohen



Daniel Sheedy

Kathleen Stern

dmk