

NORTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Norton, Massachusetts

RECEIVED
NORTON TOWN CLERK
2022 NOV 15 AM 11:07

NORTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING

Date of School Committee Meeting: Thursday, October 27, 2022

Location: Norton High School Library

Present: Committee Members: Chairperson Mr. Dan Sheedy, Vice Chairperson Mrs. Sheri Cohen, Mr. Deniz Savas, Mrs. Carolyn Gallagher, Mr. Nick Schleicher ***Absent:*** Superintendent of Schools Joseph F. Baeta ***Also present:*** Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Jennifer O'Neill, School Business Administrator Kristine Hadfield, and Student Representatives Malia Savas and Antonio Romano.

Call to Order: Chairperson Sheedy called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and announced that the meeting was being video recorded and asked that if anybody else is recording to please let the Committee know.

Pledge of Allegiance

Warrants Information:

Mr. Sheedy reported that the following School Expense Warrants and School Payroll Warrants were reviewed and approved and are to be entered into public record:

School Expense Warrants:

- October 13, 2022 \$2,774,148.04
- October 19, 2022 \$ 948,361.98

School Payroll Warrants:

- October 6, 2022 \$1,095,344.77

Student Representative Updates:

Antonio Romano and Malia Savas updated the Committee on some upcoming Halloween school events. The elementary grades are excited for Trunk or Treat being held at the HAY on Friday, October 28, 2022 at 6:00 pm. Teachers and students are excited to dress in their costumes. The Middle School will also be dressing in costumes and will host the Halloween Dance, which has not been held since 2019. The High School will be hosting movie night and costume contests between teachers and students.

Vote to Approve Minutes of October 13, 2022 Open Session Meeting:

MOTION: by Mr. Savas to Approve Minutes of October 13, 2022 Open School Committee Meetings

SECOND: by Mrs. Gallagher

VOTE: 4 – 0 - 1 abstain

Vote to Approve Minutes of October 17, 2022 Open Session Meeting:

MOTION: by Mr. Savas to Approve Minutes of October 17, 2022 Open School Committee Meetings

SECOND: by Mrs. Gallagher

VOTE: 3 – 0 - 2 abstain

Opening School Remarks, Norton High School:

Mr. Ethan Dolleman, Principal, advised the Committee that the High School had a very successful opening school year. He advised the Committee open enrollment was 687 students and announced new staff members to the High School. Construction has been going on and the students and staff have been good about it. He updated the Committee with fall sports and their status at this time. There are positive beginnings and enthusiasm for the programs Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), Professional Learning Community (PLC), and Project Based Learning (PBL).

Sarah's Village Presentation, Mr. and Mrs. Bresnahan:

Mr. Vincent Cerce, Director of PPS, introduced Mr. and Mrs. Bresnahan and recognized the community support they have given. Mrs. Cynthia Bresnahan is a retired NPS teacher, and with her husband and family they have created Sarah's Village. This foundation is a Mass-based, non-profit organization with a Mission to: Promote wellness, eliminate the stigma associated with mental illness, and reduce the rate of suicide of young people in our communities and across the United States. Mr. and Mrs. Bresnahan shared their journey and expressed how they wanted to, "turn tragic into magic". Funds raised are directed to communities. They have supported the partnership between NPS and the Epione Health and Wellness Center of Norton by donating \$20,000 for support and counselling of students. They also support the "Stress to Success" seminars for students at the Middle School and High School. Collaborating with Mr. Cerce and the Epione Center, there has been a huge success in getting support to someone in need in a timely fashion, i.e, not having to wait for insurance approval, which could take weeks.

The Committee and people in attendance thanked the Bresnahan Family for their support and all they have done, as well as expressed sorrow for their loss. Fundraising events or donations can be located on their website Sarah's Village.

MCAS Overview:

Dr. Jennifer O'Neill addressed the Committee with the District's MCAS overview of the 2022 MCAS performance. She presented a Power Point overview of the results. The data was compared to the Fall of 2019 results, which was pre-pandemic. The Committee discussed and commented on the lower results and addressed areas of concern on how absenteeism of staff and students affected the lower results. Dr. O'Neill discussed procedures and interventions in place to address these issues. Vision 2026 will be implementing plans to help move forward. The Committee suggested an update on how the students are doing after the new year.

Second Reading and Vote on New Policy IJND-A – Cellular Phones and Similar Personal Electronic Devices:

The Committee clarified the new policy represents an “off and away” policy.

Ms. Lauren Bukowski, Academic Coordinator of the Science Department at the High School, addressed the Committee. She presented the idea that if the cell phone is still with a student in their pocket or purse, it still presents a mental stress for the student to ignore it. Her policy has been for students to put the device in a designated pocket on the wall so it is away from the student. Another concern is if a student asks to be excused from the classroom, this can present the opportunity for the student to talk on the phone in the hallway or in the bathroom. Another concern she expressed is how the teacher is more relaxed and calm when not distracted by students looking at their device.

The Committee discussed the issues presented. The Committee noted there is nothing written in the policy about the usage of a cell phone during class time. It was noted teachers can adjust this policy to accommodate their classroom.

MOTION: by Mr. Savas to approve the Policy IJND-A – Cellular Phones and Similar Personal Electronic Devices, as written

SECOND: by Mrs. Cohen

VOTE: 4 – 1 motion carries

Second Reading and Vote on Amended Policy JEC – Regulation of School Attendance:

Mr. Sheedy asked if there were any further discussions. None at this time.

MOTION: by Mr. Savas to approve the Amended Policy JEC – Regulations of School Attendance, as written

SECOND: by Mrs. Gallagher

VOTE: 5 – 0 motion carries

Second Reading and Vote on Amended Policy JH – Regulation of School Attendance – Student Absences and Excuses:

Mr. Sheedy asked if there were any further discussions. None at this time.

MOTION: by Mr. Savas to approve the Amended Policy JEC – Regulations of School Attendance-Student Absences and Excuses, as written

SECOND: by Mrs. Gallagher

VOTE: 4 -1 motion carries

Second Reading and Vote on New Signage Policy:

Mr. Savas addressed the Committee and suggested to strike the statement in the second line “and approved student groups as set forth herein” from the policy. The Committee reviewed with no amendment.

MOTION: by Mr. Savas to approve the New Signage Policy, as written

SECOND: by Mrs. Gallagher

VOTE: 4 - 1 motion carries

Second Reading and Vote on Norton High School Handbook RE: Student Attendance:

The Committee, along with Mr. Dolleman, Principal, discussed and reviewed the updates. Issues discussed involved topics relating to connecting grades to behavior, the process of a pass/fail consequence of more than five unexcused absences, credit loss and requirements for graduation, and academic penalties.

Mr. Dolleman will provide the Committee with more data from the information and research he and his staff had reviewed in order to update this policy. The Committee thanked Mr. Dolleman and his staff for all the efforts put into updating the handbook.

At this time, the Committee would like to exclude the highlighted paragraphs on Page 3 from this policy and then reviewed at a later date:

“If a student has more than five unexcused absences (acknowledged absences or trancies, as defined above) from school or any class in a quarter then the student will only be eligible for a Pass/Fail grade in any such class/classes for that quarter. These grades will be represented as a Pass (P=65%) or Fail (F=59%). If the actual grade was lower than 59, that grade will stand.

Due to a shortened fourth term, graduating seniors may accrue no more than four, acknowledged absences or trancies.”

MOTION: by Mr. Savas to exclude the highlighted portion of the presented policy as stated above and approve the remainder of the Updated NHS Handbook RE: Student Attendance, as written.

SECOND: by Mrs. Cohen

VOTE: 5 – 0 motion carries

Other Business: None at this time

Motion to Adjourn

MOTION: by Mrs. Cohen to adjourn

SECOND: by Mr. Savas

VOTE: 5-0 motion carries


The meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Next Meeting Date: Thursday, November 10, 2022 at the NMS Library at 6:00 p.m.


Documents and Other Exhibits Used at Meeting:

- New Policy IJND-A – Cellular Phones and Similar Personal Electronic Devices
- Amended Policy JEC – Regulation of School Attendance
- Amended Policy JH – Regulation of School Attendance – Student Absences and Excuses
- New Signage Policy
- Updated NHS Handbook RE: Student Attendance

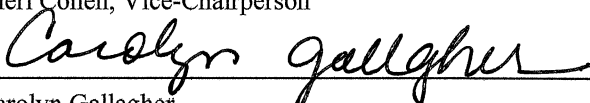
Respectfully Submitted,
Joseph F. Baeta, Ed.D.
Secretary Pro Tem



Daniel Sheedy, Chairperson



Sheri Cohen, Vice-Chairperson



Carolyn Gallagher

Deniz Savas


Nick Schleicher

dmk