

NORTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Norton, Massachusetts

NORTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING

Date of School Committee Meeting: Thursday, September 28, 2023

Location: High School Library

Present: Committee Members: Vice Chairperson Mr. Deniz Savas, Mr. Nick Schleicher, Mrs. Justine Callanan, and Mr. Dan Sheedy ***Not present:*** Chairperson Mrs. Sheri Cohen ***Also present:*** Superintendent of Schools Jennifer O'Neill, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Brian Ackerman, School Business Administrator Kristine Hadfield and Student Representatives Antonio Romano and Gabriela Kenaan

Call to Order: Vice Chairperson Savas called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Vice Chairperson Savas announced that the meeting was being recorded by Norton Cable and asked if anyone was recording to let the Committee know.

Pledge of Allegiance

Vote to Approve Minutes of September 14, 2023 Open Session Meeting:

MOTION: by Mr. Sheedy to approve Minutes of September 14, 2023 Open Session Meeting

SECOND: by Mr. Schleicher

VOTE: 4 – 0 Motion Carries

Warrants:

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

School Expense Warrant:

September 14, 2023 \$ 679,071.47

School Payroll Warrant:

September 7, 2023 \$1,244,653.84

Opening School Remarks – Principal Ethan Dolleman:

The Principal of Norton High School, Ethan Dolleman addressed the Committee on what a wonderful job the custodians, administrative assistants and the staff did to get the school opened. He presented to the Committee a slide presentation and discussed the Lancer Learning Block (LLB) schedule and the different programs offered like PBIS, MyCap and Innovation Pathways. They want to get more out of this block. He updated the Committee about senior activities, the athletic programs and was proud to announce the Unified Basketball Team includes 20 students. He is looking forward to a great 2023-2024 school year.

Student Representative Update:

JCS- The school year of celebrations at JCS has kicked off to a great start. The staff, students, and school community have embraced many changes and have been extremely supportive. Students have adjusted quickly to the school routines and are working hard to exhibit Safe, Respectful, and Responsible behavior to earn Turtle Tokens! We are looking forward too many fun activities that are coming up in October.

NHS – Seniors got the year started by celebrating with a Senior Sunrise Breakfast. They attended the Senior Cruise which was a disco theme and everyone had an amazing time on the Boston Harbor. The heat was an issue at the beginning of the school year, but teachers and students made the best of it by keeping lights off, getting water regularly, and going to cooler spaces like the library, auditorium and cafeteria when they could. In October, students are looking forward to events like the College Fair, Career Day and the annual costume contest.

HAY – The school is excited to get the 5th grade band started. Band instruction starts next week with 40 students interested.

On Wednesday, September 27, and Thursday, September 28, Sgt. Dennett was able to get the UMASS Memorial Healthcare and Mapfre Foundation to bring a fun, immersive learning experience to our school, where our students were able to use interactive media to teach our 5th graders how to be safe from unintended injury. The activities in this huge interactive RV work to influence the students to act in the best interest of their own safety. The mobile classroom is a branded, fully outfitted RV with interactive educational games for the students to learn through direct and indirect learning experiences with the aid of UMass Memorial volunteers. Every student said how much fun it was and how great it was to have this opportunity to learn and be safe. Thank you, Sgt. Dennett and the NPD.

Today, Dr. O'Neill spent the day at the school for her residency. She was in and out of classrooms, talking with teachers and students, and seeing all the excellent learning going on. She also did some Good News Calls of the Day. What an unbelievable honor and treat it was for some of our students to have the Superintendent of Schools call home and tell these families what a great job their kids are doing. Thank you, Dr. O'Neill!

Personnel Update - Dr. Jennifer O'Neill:

Dr. O'Neill presented the Committee with NPS Staff Changes for 2023-2024 and Years of Service Recognitions, which shows great dedication with 610 years of service. The Committee discussed open positions and exit interviews. There are many reasons for staff members to leave and administration does offer to meet with personnel for an exit interview. Surveys are sent to the personnel with a 75-80% response versus interviews.

Supporting Students' Social Emotional Learning, Behavioral & Mental Health, and Wellness Grant Update – Dr. Jennifer O'Neill and Mr. Vincent Cerce:

Dr. O'Neill and Mr. Cerce presented to the Committee a power point and discussed the purpose of the FY'23 Grant which awarded \$150,000 to expand and strengthen Integrated Multi-Tiered System of Support (IMTSS) for social and emotional learning for all students. This included discussions regarding SEL Screener-BIMAS and Curriculum implemented in the schools:

- Grades K-5 Character Strong Purposeful People
- Grades 6-8 Character Strong
- Grades 9-12 Navigate 360

This will be posted on the website to show the different skills taught at each grade level.

Mr. Cerce reviewed partnerships with community based mental health agencies. The district has applied for the FY'24 continuation grant for an additional \$94,500.

The Committee discussed and clarified issues regarding:

- Bridge program includes all students for whatever reason: an extended school absence, hospitalization, physical, chronic illness, truancy or other reason.
- Parents will be provided information ahead of time to review for questions or concerns and can opt-out.
- There is a curriculum designed for the teachers to navigate and deliver appropriate for students.
- There are nine character traits to promote skills and a letter will be sent home for families to continue working on the trait for the month. This is a lesson for all students and SPED students feel more included with the other students which ties everyone together.
- These lessons will be presented during LLB at the High School and Ice Block at the Middle School. They are 10–15-minute lessons.
- PBIS teams will look and review the implementation, study student data utilizing SWIS and address issues needed within the system to make any necessary changes in the structure of this program.
- This is a 5-year grant, so administration will review the program at that time to determine continuing, funding, alternative programs offered at that time, etc., to keep the program.
- The Committee would like to continue to be updated on the status of this program and put as an agenda item on future meetings.

At 7:00 p.m., Vice Chairperson Savas suspended the meeting to enter into Joint Meeting with Finance Committee.

Minutes of this meeting are under separate documentation.

At 9:09 p.m., School Committee Meeting Resumed

Acceptance of DESE Grants – Mrs. Kristine Hadfield:

Mrs. Hadfield presented the Committee with award notifications for the following grants:

- Building Capacity for High-Quality Instruction through EdTech Grant of \$49,104
- Innovation Career Pathways Implementation and Support Grant of \$59,150

MOTION: by Mr. Sheedy to Accept the Grants

SECOND: by Mr. Schleicher

VOTE: 4 – 0 Motion Carries

Other Business:

Nothing to report at this time.

Adjourn:

MOTION: by Mr. Sheedy to adjourn meeting

SECOND: by Mr. Schleicher

VOTE: 4 - 0 Motion Carries

The meeting adjourned at 9:11 p.m.

Next Meeting Date: Thursday, October 12, 2023 at 6:00 p.m., in the NMS Library

Documents and Other Exhibits Used at Meeting:

- Years of Service Recognition – September 2023
- Supporting Student SEL, Behavioral & Mental Health Grant
- Scope & Sequence Documents for SEL Curriculum
- Award Notification for the Building Capacity for High-Quality Instruction through EdTech Grant
- Award Notification for the Innovation Career Pathways Implementation and Support Grant

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer O'Neill, Ed.D.
Secretary Pro Tem

Sheri Cohen, Chairperson

Deniz Savas, Vice-Chairman

Nick Schleicher

Dan Sheedy

Justine Callanan

dmk