

NORTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Norton, Massachusetts

NORTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING

"EMERGENCY" School Committee Meeting - January 12, 2010

Superintendent's Conference Room

Meeting Called to Order: 9:05 a.m.

Present: Tom Golota, Marge Werner, Beth McManus (quorum)

Chairman Golota called the meeting to order. Both Mr. Mackie and Mr. Savas identified themselves as being on speaker phone. Supt. Ansay apprised Committee members of two points of clarification relative to the Agenda item of January 11, 2010, titled "Vote to Sign Race to the Top Memorandum of Agreement," that were unavailable at the January 11, 2010 meeting." She offered that members needed correct information to make an informed decision.

1. The estimated funding that Norton would realize from the RTTT Grant is \$40,000, each year, for four years, not \$40,000 over four years. This is assuming that Norton's Title 1 Grant allotment for FY '11 is not decreased. If it is, the estimated RTTT funding could range from \$35,000 to \$40,000 for the life of the RTTT Grant.

2. MASC's email reads, "It is our understanding that you can drop out – especially if after the initial planning stages you don't think it's a good idea." Relative to "opting out" of the RTTT Grant, the DESE offered,

“What happens if we sign the MOU and attempt to plan and/or implement these reforms and find that they won't work in our LEA?

We expect LEAs to put in a good faith effort to implement the initiatives they agree to in the MOU, but we recognize that in some cases, circumstances may leave some LEAs unable to fulfill their commitment. We will work with you to try to resolve any issues that may come up in your LEA around planning and implementation. However, if they simply cannot be resolved, you have the option to drop out of the Race to the Top participation without penalty at any time during the four-year grant period, returning unspent funds to us. We hope and intend that this will be a rare event, as too much dropout by participating LEAs would decrease our statewide impact and could endanger the state's grant.”

Discussion followed.

A motion was made to direct the Chairman to meet the DESE deadline of January 13, 2010 to sign the Memorandum of Understanding as presented by the DESE and the Memorandum of Agreement between the Norton Teachers' Association, Norton School Committee and the Norton School Superintendent as presented.

A roll call vote of members physically present followed: Mrs. Werner-Yes; Mrs. McManus-No; Mr. Golota-Yes. Of those physically present, 2 members voted in favor, and 1 was opposed.

Motion carries 2-1.

It should be noted however, that this vote came with serious concerns. These include:

- the uncertainty of the amount of forthcoming funding
- the limited timeframe provided for School Committee consideration
- the general vagueness of required LEA initiatives
- the uncertainty of being allowed to completely opt out of the grant, if the burden becomes greater than the perceived benefit
- the ability to fund these initiatives with local monies after the life of the grant; increasing unfunded mandates
- Norton, like many other districts, is having difficulty funding its current programs and initiatives. The Scope of this grant work will focus on new programs and initiatives, requiring either additional local funding or the elimination of existing non-RTTT programs

Unless these reservations are resolved, the Norton School Committee may, at a future date vote to rescind the initial vote and opt out of the RTTT Grant Project.

Adjourned: 9:25 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Patricia H. Ansay, Ed.D.
Secretary pro tem
