

NORTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Norton, Massachusetts

NORTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING

Date of School Committee Meeting: Monday, May 16, 2011

Location: Norton Middle School Library

Attending: Committee Members: Chairperson Elizabeth McManus, Vice-chairperson Mr. Deniz Savas, Mr. Tom Golota, Mr. Andrew Mackie, and Mrs. Margaret Werner. Superintendent Patricia Ansay and Student Representatives Kady Ferguson and Sarah Pishdadian were also present.

Call to Order: Chairperson McManus called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

Pledge of Allegiance:

Vote to Approve Minutes of Prior Meetings:

Mr. Mackie made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of the April 12th executive session and the May 2nd regular session, seconded by Mrs. Werner. The vote was 5-0 in favor of the motion.

Transfers:

One budget transfer was recommended, to move an amount of money from the SPED transportation account to the regular transportation account for homeless students. On a motion by Mr. Savas, seconded by Mrs. Werner, the motion was approved by a 5-0 vote.

Reappointment of Norton High School Student Representatives to the School Committee for 2011-2012 School Year:

A motion was made by Mr. Golota, seconded by Mr. Savas, to reappoint Kady Ferguson and Sarah Pishdadian as student representatives to the School Committee for the 2011-2012 school year. The vote was 5-0 in favor of the motion.

Norton High School Senior Project Presentation – Colleen McDermott:

Colleen McDermott presented her senior project, Leadership Training, to the Committee. It was her intention for it to be part of the Wellness course, and hopefully added as a semester course. She highlighted the different components of the project and gave an overview of the benefits she, and other students, had gained through the Leadership Training. Mr. Dewar added that this is the first course to be developed by a student. The Committee thanked Colleen for her excellent presentation. Mr. Dewar requested that the Committee approve the addition of the Leadership Training course for the next school year. On a motion by Mr. Golota, seconded by Mrs. Werner, the vote was 5-0 in favor.

Bullying Survey Results – Mr. Richard Godmintz, Mrs. Jennifer O’Neil:

All students in Grades 3, 4, and 5, parents and staff completed the survey. Mr. Godmintz and Mrs. O’Neil took the data and established a baseline. Questions on the survey included Frequency of Bullying, Method of Bullying, Location of Bullying, Reporting of Bullying, Adult Response, Prevention I & II, Reported Incidents by Principals, and Suggestions for Future Studies. Mr. Mackie felt this survey was an excellent start. Mr. Savas questioned some aspects of the survey. Mr. Godmintz pointed out that it will take several years before a survey will have meaningful results. After lengthy discussion, Mr. Mackie made a motion to receive bullying survey results and place on file, seconded by Mr. Golota. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

Revisions to Norton High School and Norton Middle School Handbooks:

Assistant Principal Megan Lafayette discussed the following proposed changes to the handbooks: ID Card Policy; Cell Phone Use; Saturday School; Add Hazing Language from District Policy Manual; and French/Spanish Honor Society Criteria. Mr. Mackie made a motion to accept the handbook changes, seconded by Mr. Golota. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

Strategy to Meet Common Core Standards – Mr. Michael O’Rourke, Mrs. Mary Taylor, Mr. Richard Godmintz:

Mr. O’Rourke explained the proposed reorganization of the Grade 6 and Grade 7 academic schedule. In Grade 7 students will have two math periods. Grade 6 students will have two English/language arts periods. Grade 8 students should be taking algebra or geometry. All English teachers will teach English and language arts and the current reading specialists will assist struggling students in Grades 6-8 during the ICE block. It will take several years to determine the effectiveness of this reorganization. Administration is looking at professional development and strategies the teachers will need. On a motion by Mr. Mackie, seconded by Mrs. Werner, the vote was 5-0 in favor of the recommended changes.

Update on Norton High School Building Project – Mr. Kevin O’Neil:

Mr. O’Neil presented the updated schematic design and plot plan. Also shown were artist renditions of the outside of the building and the addition. Numerous meetings with various town boards have been conducted and the submittal of paperwork is complete. The MSBA will take a formal vote on May 25th to allow the project to move forward. Mrs. McManus pointed out that the project will require a debt exclusion for 20 years, not a Prop 2 ½ override. She also pointed out that the middle school debt has been paid in full.

Approval of Animals in School Policy Revision:

The policy was adopted in March, 2011. Revisions include the addition of “Service Animals” to the title of the policy, a paragraph added to the second page relative to procedures for eligibility to bring service animals into the schools, and changes to the next to last paragraph on the third page. Mrs. Anderson, Head Nurse, attended a regional meeting that suggested these changes. Mrs. Werner motioned to accept the proposed changes, seconded by Mr. Savas. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote.

Approval of Temporary Administrative Arrangements Policy Revision:

Dr. Ansay recommended a revision to the original policy adopted December 2000 to include Director of Special Education/Pupil Personnel Services and Director of Finance and Operations. These individuals work a full calendar year and are Central Office Administrators with district-wide responsibilities and experience. In case of emergency, in the absence of the Superintendent, the Director of Special Education/Pupil Personnel Services would take change. Second would be the high school principal along with Director of Finance and Operations. Mr. Mackie made a motion to accept the policy changes, seconded by Mr. Golota. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote.

Personnel:

Resignations:

Mrs. Amy Berdos, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, effective July 1, 2011

Mrs. Danielle Klingaman, L. G. Nourse Elementary School Principal, effective June 30, 2011.

Other:

Dr. Ansay informed the Committee that the proposed meeting dates for the 2011-2012 school year followed the current year's schedule but may have minor adjustments.

Dr. Ansay stated that a recap meeting was held with the review team from the Center for District and School Accountability prior to their departure. The final report will not be issued until the fall.

Mrs. Werner said that Wheaton will hold a community yard sale on May 27th and May 28th and proceeds will benefit the Norton Public Schools. Items left behind by the college students will be for sale.

Mr. Mackie made a motion, seconded by Mr. Golota, to enter executive session and not return to open session. On a roll call vote, all members voted in the affirmative. The meeting adjourned at 9:05 P.M.

NEXT MEETING DATE: June 13, 2011, at Norton Middle School.

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