

NORTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Norton, Massachusetts

NORTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING

Date of School Committee Meeting: Monday, June 8, 2015

Location: Norton Middle School Library

Present: Committee Members: Chairman Andrew Mackie, Vice-Chairman Deniz Savas, Mrs. Valerie Desmond, Mr. Daniel Sheedy, and Mrs. Marge Werner. Also present: Superintendent of Schools Joseph F. Baeta, School Business Manager Lincoln Lynch, Director of Curriculum and Instruction Jennifer O'Neill, Director of Pupil Personnel Services Jeanne Sullivan, Director of Technology Karen Winsper, Student Representatives Amanda Galpin and Daniel Gao.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:32 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance:

Vote to Approve Meeting Minutes:

MOTION: by Mr. Savas to approve the minutes of the May 18, 2015 open meeting

SECOND: by Mrs. Werner

VOTE: 3 yes 1 abstain motion carries (Mr. Sheedy arrived after the vote)

Student Representatives Update:

The students informed the Committee of activities at the high school.

- Sports Night
- Special Olympics held in Attleboro
- Send-Off Party
- Honor Society Activities
- Senior Spirit Week
- Student Council Elections

Presentation by JCS Students – Students and Teachers:

JCS Grade 2 teachers Kerri Bransfield and Rebecca Macera, and several of their students were present to discuss a special project. The students followed an Iditarod Dog Musher, Seth Barnes, and wrote letters to him during the recent race in Alaska. Students read their letters for the Committee.

Maureen Allen, Debbie Araujo, JCS Grade 2 teachers, and Jenn Ryan, JCS Computer Instructor also accompanied a group of students who created a portrait book as a class project, which could be purchased by parents.

Introduction of H. A. Yelle Elementary School Principal – Dr. Joseph Baeta:

Dr. Baeta introduced Mr. Anthony DiFonso, newly appointed principal of HAY. Mr. DiFonso holds a Master's Degree in Education from Lesley University and a Bachelor's Degree from Northeastern University. The hiring process included a search committee who narrowed the field to four. Over forty applicants submitted applications. Mr. DiFonso stated that he is very anxious to begin on July 1st. The Committee welcomed him to Norton.

Awarding of NEED Grants – Mrs. Gretchen Stalters:

Mrs. Stalters gave the background of the organization and introduced members Angel Doyle, Karen LaCamera, Beth Blakeley, and Donna Ross. Other members of NEED are Rick Marcotte and Pam Anderson. This is the eighth year they have been able to provide grants for books, supplies, equipment, and teacher training which is not available from the regular budget. This year they held two major fundraisers and formed a corporate alliance with Horizon Beverage, which donated \$3,500. Seventeen applications were submitted this year and approximately \$12,000 was awarded to the following staff members:

- Jerusha Bjork, Jennifer Ryan, Emily Packer, and Michael Manske
- Brittany Conley
- Alicia Silva
- Cheryl Mulligan
- Kim Zajac
- Maryann Welch
- Susan Cashton
- Eric Beard
- Carol Clark
- Kayla Sweed and Aaron Sumner
- Martha Godfrey

Each year NEED also provides funds to the NHS Business Department for their support of the Thank-A-Teacher fundraiser, and the Elementary Art Departments for purchasing needed supplies to assist with the Square 1 Artwork fundraiser.

School Choice Funds Discussion – Dr. Joseph Baeta:

The current School Choice Account has \$67,000 for 11 students who are attending NPS. Dr. Baeta discussed his rationale for each of the expenditures as follows:

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| 1. Textbooks for Early Elementary, Grade 6 Math and ELA, Math and Science at NMS | \$28,000 |
| 2. Start-Up costs for On-line Assessment for Grades K-5 (change in vendor) | \$10,000 |
| 3. Targeted Professional Development for Interventions TT Program | \$10,000 |
| 4. Instructional Technology devices for K-3 (lease or purchase) | \$18,000 |

Mr. Savas stated that he does not support the expenditure for Item #1, but is very pleased with School Choice and commended Dr. Baeta for its implementation.

Distribution of these funds does not require a School Committee vote.

FY '16 Overview of Budget and Breakfast Fees Vote – Mr. Lincoln Lynch:

The \$25,000,000 FY '16 operating budget was approved at Town Meeting. It was the largest increase in ten years, 3.57 percent, \$830,000. Dr. Baeta discussed staff reductions due to a decrease in State grants.

Mr. Lynch requested an increase of \$.25 to the cost of breakfast to students, for a total of \$1.50. The cost of breakfast has not been increased since its inception in 2007. Compared to surrounding communities, Norton's breakfast cost is one of the lowest.

MOTION: by Mr. Savas to approve the increase of breakfast for students to \$1.50

SECOND: by Mrs. Werner

VOTE: 5 yes motion carries

Approval of Revisions to NHS and NMS Handbooks – Ms. Lisa Giuliano and Mr. Vincent Hayward:

Mr. Hayward thanked his Site Council for its assistance this year. The major changes, additions, removals, and updates are in the areas of the dress code, homework policy, athletic policy, discipline, and honor roll/honors breakfast. Currently one third of the students earn honor roll status (no term grade below B-). All honor roll students are invited to the Honors Breakfast. The proposed change would require students to have an overall GPA of 3.3 (roughly a B+/88 on a 4.0 scale). The change would provide an incentive for students to reach achievement.

MOTION: by Mr. Savas to approve the changes to the NMS 2015-2016 Handbook

SECOND: by Mrs. Desmond

VOTE: 5 yes motion carries

Ms. Giuliano reviewed the proposed changes to the NHS Handbook which are primarily absences and dress code. The Committee discussed the criteria for tardiness and its consequences.

MOTION: by Mrs. Werner to approve the changes to the NHS 2015-2016 Handbook

SECOND: by Mrs. Desmond

VOTE: 4 yes 1 no motion carries

Superintendent's Report – Dr. Joseph Baeta:

The Superintendent updated the Committee on relevant topics including:

- School Improvement Plans and Process
- Technology Plan
- Educational Programming Report

School Safety Update – School Resource Officer, Jacob Dennett:

Sgt. Dennett reviewed his first year as School Resource Officer. He felt that being pro-active was very beneficial. Trust has been built and students feel comfortable with him. He is looking forward to next year.

Adjourn:

The chairman announced that the meeting would adjourn, not to return to open session, for the purpose of discussion on School Safety and Crisis Plan. Roll call vote: Mrs. Werner-yes; Mr. Mackie-yes; Mrs. Desmond-yes; Mr. Sheedy-yes, Mr. Savas-yes.

The open session adjourned at 8:37 PM.

Next Meeting Date: Monday, September 14, 2015, at Norton High School

Documents and Other Exhibits used at Meeting:

- Budget and Breakfast Fee
- NMS/NHS Handbook Proposed Changes

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

Andrew Mackie, Chairman

Deniz Savas, Vice-Chairman

Valerie Desmond

Daniel Sheedy

Margaret Werner