

NORTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Norton, Massachusetts

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NORTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING

Date of Meeting: Thursday, October 14, 2021

Location: Norton Middle School Library and Remote Participation

Present: Committee Members: Chairperson Deniz Savas, Vice-Chairperson Dan Sheedy, Mrs. Sheri Cohen, Mrs. Carolyn Gallagher, and Mrs. Kathleen Stern (remotely). **Also present:** Superintendent of Schools Joseph F. Baeta, and Director of Technology Karen Winsper. Present remotely: Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Jennifer O'Neill, School Business Administrator Matthew Wells, Director of Facilities Wade Lizotte, Director of Pupil Personnel Services Vincent Cerce, Coordinator of Special Education Casey Russo, and Student Representatives Zoe Duran and Malia Savas.

Call to Order: Chairperson Savas called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., noting that the meeting was being recorded.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairperson Savas handed the meeting over to Dr. Baeta who asked for a moment of silence in memory of JCS student, Aubriella Derosier, who had recently passed away.

Mr. Savas noted that Mrs. Stern was attending the meeting remotely.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

MOTION: by Mr. Sheedy to approve the Minutes of the September 23, 2021 Open and Executive Session Meetings

SECOND: by Mrs. Stern

ROLL CALL VOTE: Kathleen Stern – Yes; Carolyn Gallagher – Yes; Sheri Cohen – Yes; Dan Sheedy – Yes; Deniz Savas - Yes
5 - 0 Motion Carries

Warrants:

Mrs. Cohen 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:

- September 21, 2021 \$ 473,026.29
- October 7, 2021 \$ 432,721.18

School Payroll Warrants:

- September 23, 2021 \$1,218,253.40
- October 7, 2021 \$1,093,830.02

Student Representatives Update:

Malia Savas and Zoe Duran updated the Committee.

LGN: Students were asked how they felt about being back to school in person as opposed to remote and hybrid learning. Responses included: "I love getting out make new friends and playing with them during recess", "I like the teachers at LGN", and "I like that we have great choices for lunch in the cafeteria."

HAY: Students were asked what the benefits were of in-person learning. Responses included: being able to make and be with friends; being able to learn from the comfort of school; and having ability to be creative in-person rather than just being online with better projects and activities. When asked what the disadvantages were they responded that they didn't have much for this. Regarding how learning has changes since before COVID responses included: it got a lot harder; 5th graders now have to switch teachers.

NMS: On Wednesday, October 13th students in the STEP program participated in unified Bocce at Beckwith Middle School in Rehoboth. There were 9 student athletes and 4 staff members that attended. The next match is Wednesday, October 20th at Case Junior High School in Swansea.

NHS: Students were polled regarding the benefits and disadvantages of in-person learning. Responses regarding benefits included: "I seem to get better grades", "Less procrastination", "More hands on learning activities", and "See teachers more". Disadvantages comments included: "Five days a week is tough", Waking up every day", and "Always at school". Things students missed from hybrid were the staggered arrival / late arrival; there was less traffic; got to sleep in and stay at home some of the time; and remote Mondays were great. Since Post-COVID changes, students said that teachers have been more flexible with deadlines; less homework; more homework; and less paperwork.

Superintendent's Revised Goals for 2020-2022:

Dr. Baeta addressed the Committee regarding his revised goals for 2020-2022, noting a continuation and resetting of some goals.

Updates included:

- Completion of the Panorama Student Survey for Grades 3-12 as well as the anonymous Student Health and Wellness Survey for Grades 6-12.
- An Individual Professional Development Plan will be created pending survey results.
- Cultural Proficiency Task Force has been appointed and includes staff, parents, students, and community members.

It was noted that Goal #1 had been completed.

Grades PK – 12 Enrollment Update:

Dr. Baeta presented a brief overview of enrollment data for October 2021 including comparisons to enrollment data for October 2020. Data shared included in district, out of district, school choice, and READS DHH program enrollment. School choice enrollment increased by 23 students. Applications for school choice close on September 1 or when caps reached. Currently class sizes are approximately 22 to 23 students at the HAY, 22 for early elementary grades, and 18-19 for Kindergarten. The school choice cap numbers will be looked at again. There are 52 students being homeschooled.

A lot of registrations were received in August. Charter school, Southeastern, and Bristol Agricultural school numbers were not available yet. Southeastern and Bristol Aggie figures seem to be holding steady.

It was noted that JCS, LGN, and HAY could absorb larger numbers of school choice students as it is easy to add a teacher. It is tougher at the Middle School because of the classroom structure. There could be space issues.

Special Education Enrollment Update:

Dr. Baeta shared information regarding special education enrollment. He noted that the figures include itinerant students receiving services as well as enrolled students receiving specialized services. These numbers fluctuate all the time.

Superintendent's Report on Pathway Options:

Dr. Baeta reported that this initiative started in March 2020 as a means to offer choices to students. Four areas being looked at are:

1. Early College
2. Innovation Pathways
3. Career Technical Education
4. Alternative Education

With Early College, students could earn 12-18 college level credits. Classes are taught by UMASS Professors or our own staff who could become adjunct professors. Students would learn at a college level but with their high school cohort. The credits would be considered like AP credits.

Innovation Pathways is a complicated process. Students would work with our School to Career program regarding the application process.

Career Technical Education includes Chapter 74 programs options including Public Safety. We currently have a Chapter 74 Business/Technology and Marketing program with around 66 students in the program. It is about a two year process to create and have a program approved through the state. Dr. Baeta said that he would like to change the name of Alternative Education so not to label students. The program would be for students that work or want to work. Courses could be offered, for example, for a CNA program.

More information will be forthcoming on these programs. Staff members have been working on this and we have been working with the Educational Alliance.

Mrs. Gallagher asked who would cover the tuition. Dr. Baeta said we were going after federal funds, third parties, and federal stimulus money. Mrs. Gallagher also asked what was in it for UMASS. Dr. Baeta said that UMASS has seen some enrollment decline in the north shore and in Dartmouth. Private schools are moving toward merit based tuition assistance. Keene State is offering college credit for tech ed students.

Vote to Elect Kathleen Stern as School Committee Delegate at the Massachusetts Association of School Committees Annual Business Meeting on November 6, 2021:

Dr. Baeta said that the provided resolutions are to be voted on at the next MASAC meeting. No vote is being taken at this time regarding the direction the Committee wants to go on these resolutions. The vote will take place at the October 28th meeting.

Mrs. Stern has volunteered to represent the Committee at the meeting and said that currently she is registered as a virtual participant and that she is on the waitlist for an in-person spot. This year's meeting is being held on a Saturday, she doesn't see how the meeting can be done virtually. Mrs. Stern noted that it seems that things get voted on at these meetings but nothing gets done.

MOTION: by Mrs. Gallagher to Elect Kathleen Stern as the School Committee Delegate at the Massachusetts Association of School Committees Annual Business Meeting on November 6, 2021:
SECOND: by Mr. Sheedy
ROLL CALL VOTE: Kathleen Stern – Yes; Carolyn Gallagher – Yes; Sheri Cohen – Yes; Dan Sheedy – Yes; Deniz Savas – Yes
5 - 0 Motion Carries

Other:

- Mr. Sheedy read an open invite letter from the Veteran's Council regarding the Veteran's Day parade being held on Thursday, November 11th, at 10 a.m. Participants will assemble at 9:30 a.m. at the HAV parking lot. In the event of inclement weather, ceremonies will be held in the HAV gym.
- As required, Dr. Baeta shared a copy of the BICO Quarterly Report with the Committee.

Open Forum:

An open forum was provided for public comments.

Motion to Conclude Open Forum and Adjourn:

MOTION: by Mr. Sheedy to adjourn
SECOND: by Mrs. Cohen
ROLL CALL VOTE: Kathleen Stern – Yes; Carolyn Gallagher – Yes; Sheri Cohen – Yes; Dan Sheedy – Yes; Deniz Savas – Yes
5 - 0 Motion Carries
The meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Next scheduled meeting date: October 28, 2021

Documents and Other Exhibits Used at Meeting:

- Superintendent's Revised Goals 2020-2022 document
- NPS Enrollment data sheet dated October 8, 2021
- NPS Special Education Enrollment data sheet dated October 4, 2021
- Superintendent's report on Pathway Options
- Report of the Resolutions Committee of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees
- Letter from Norton Veterans' Council dated September 30, 2021 regarding the Veteran's Day Parade
- Bi-County Collaborative September 30, 2021 Quarterly Report

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

Deniz Savas, Chairperson

Dan Sheedy, Vice-Chairperson

Sheri Cohen

Carolyn Gallagher

Kathleen Stern

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