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NORTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Norton, Massachusetts

NORTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING

***Date of Meeting:*** Thursday, February 9, 2023

***Location:*** Norton Middle School Library

***Present:*** Committee Members: Chairperson Mr. Dan Sheedy, Mrs. Carolyn Gallagher, Deniz Savas, and Mr. Nick Schleicher. ***Absent:*** Vice Chairperson Mrs. Sheri Cohen. ***Also present:*** Superintendent of Schools Joseph F. Baeta, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Jennifer O'Neill, School Business Administrator Kristine Hadfield, and Student Representatives Malia Savas and Antonio Romano.

***Call to Order:*** Chairperson Sheedy called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

***Pledge of Allegiance***

Chairperson Sheedy announced that the meeting was being recorded and asked that if anyone was recording to let the Committee know.

***Approval of Minutes:***

MOTION: by Mr. Savas to approve Minutes of January 26, 2023 Open Session Meeting

SECOND: by Mrs. Gallagher

4 - 0 Motion Carries

MOTION: by Mr. Savas to approve Minutes of January 26, 2023 Executive Session Meeting

SECOND: by Mrs. Gallagher

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 public record:

School Expense Warrant:

- January 26, 2023 \$ 641,150.99

School Payroll Warrants:

- January 12, 2023 \$1,145,046.42
- January 26, 2023 \$1,110,385.58

***Student Representatives Update:***

Malia Savas and Antonio Romano updated the Committee on school happenings, as follows:

HAY: The HAY PTO sponsored Boosterthon Fun Glow Run raised over \$22,000 which will go directly to new playground equipment. Students did such a sensational job for the two weeks of Boosterthon, learning different character traits.

NMS: Activities during the week include Monday: Pajama Dress Up Day; Tuesday: Wear Red/Pink for Valentine's Day; Wednesday: Twins. Triplets or Group Dress Up Day; Thursday: Country or Country Club Dress Up Day; Friday: Adam Sandler Dress Up Day. Other fun activities are Trivia at lunch, a photo booth, Valentines for sale on Tuesday, and a Family Feud Style tournament on the 1/2 Day Friday. Black Light Social will be taking place at NMS for all grades on Thursday of next week.

JCS: Valentine's Day will be celebrated through a theme of Adventure. Students are trying to climb a Mountain of Kindness by committing 500 random acts of kindness between now and vacation. Kids are spreading the love in lots of great ways and have already reached over 100 sticky notes on the mountain mural in the lobby.

NHS: Annual carnation fundraiser happening this week for Valentine's Day. Carnations will be distributed on Tuesday. Student Council started a monthly teacher recognition called the Faculty member of the Month. As part of the Norton High School PBIS roll-out, teachers began filling out postcards to recognize students who embody the values of Respect, Responsibility and Connectedness.

Athletics Update: Lancers have clinched three outright league championships in Swimming, Boys Indoor Track, Girls Indoor Track and Hockey has earned at least a share of the TVL title. Girls Basketball is still alive to capture a potential TVL title. Swimming and Wrestling compete at sectionals this weekend.

***Recognition of Robert Bielawa – Assistant Vice Principal of the Year Semi-Finalist:***

Principal Geoghegan nominated Bob Bielawa for the Massachusetts School Administrators' Association Massachusetts Assistant Principal of the Year Award. Mr. Bielawa was selected as a semi-finalist and was interviewed by the organization. Dr. Baeta read the letter he received from the MSAA organization which noted Mr. Bielawa's semi-finalist status. The letter quoted some of Principal Geoghegan's words used in the nomination submission.

Dr. Baeta and members of the Committee congratulated Mr. Bielawa for this recognition as well as his accomplishments as a Dean of Students and classroom teacher. A certificate was presented to Mr. Bielawa.

***Review and Vote on Elementary Math Program Adoption:***

Dr. O'Neill introduced Mrs. Kristie Dietz, Elementary Math Coach, noting how she supports teachers in our three elementary schools with math instruction.

Stating that the last K-8 math review took place in 2015 and the updates to the DESE Frameworks in 2017, Dr. O'Neill and Mrs. Dietz shared a slide presentation overview of the steps taken to choose a new math program for adoption.

The field was narrowed down to two programs, Reveal by McGraw Hill, and Stepping Stones by Origo. During the field test phase, teachers used both programs. The recommendation was unanimous for the Stepping Stones program, citing the choice of paper copy or use on iPad, ability to go back and fix mistakes, and positive student feedback.

The goal for the rollout of the new program is before the end of the school year in June, to allow for summer curriculum work. A representative from the company will be onsite in person in the spring.

The cost of the program is \$190,000 and would be split into two years at 60% year 1 and 40% year 2. School Choice funds would support the purchase. Program includes five years of consumables which would be sent annually.

MOTION: by Mr. Savas to approve Stepping Stones Elementary Math Program as presented

SECOND: by Mrs. Gallagher

4 - 0 Motion Carries

***FY24 Budget Overview:***

Dr. Baeta shared additional budget documents with the Committee. He stated that he would be meeting on February 14<sup>th</sup> with the Town Manager and that he had not yet received any finance information from the Town.

Discussions on Special Education transportation and programs ensued, as well as the School Choice program.

***Student Absence Data:***

Dr. Baeta presented an overview of Student Unexcused Absences for the period September 6, 2022 to January 11, 2023. The data shared showed that absenteeism was highest at the JCS, followed by NMS, LGN, HAY and NHS.

***Review of 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 Proposed School Calendars:***

Dr. O'Neill presented draft school calendars for 2023-2024 and 2024-2025, noting that both calendars follow our traditional models of staff returning two days prior to students, and students starting the Tuesday after Labor Day. Calendars do not yet include early release days, etc.

As March is such a long month, Mrs. Gallagher asked if the March early release day could possibly be moved from the end of the month to mid-month.

Mr. Schleicher asked why there were so many half days. Mr. O'Neill explained that they were used for PD; for collaboration between JCS and LGN since the start times in these schools are so far apart; for parent teacher conferences (2 times for elementary schools and 1 time for NMS); and for NHS mid-terms and finals.

***Other:***

- March 3, 2023 School Committee meeting will include the FY 24 budget as well as request by Veterans Council to use grounds for carnival.
- Included in meeting packets was information received from DESE regarding new student achievement awards.
- Question asked regarding athletes missing track meet events due to bus not starting the morning of the recent extreme cold Saturday morning. Information will be requested from Aaron Sumner.
- Question asked regarding recent NHS student walkout and whether it should be put on a meeting agenda or discussed now. Determined that it would be included as a future agenda item.
- Special Town Election to be held on Saturday at Norton Middle School from 8 a.m. – 3 p.m.

***Adjourn:***

MOTION: by Mr. Savas to Adjourn

SECOND: by Mrs. Gallagher

4 – 0 Motion Carries

The meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Next Meeting Date: Thursday, January 26, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at the NMS Library

***Documents and Other Exhibits Used at Meeting:***

- Elementary Math Recommendation presentation slides
- NPS FY24 Superintendent Budget
- NPS FY24 Budget by Account report
- FY24 New Staff Request Summary report
- FY23 Move In Special Ed report
- FY23-25 Out of District Projections report
- NPS Student Unexcused Absences 9/6/22 – 1/11/23 presentation slides
- Draft 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 School Calendars

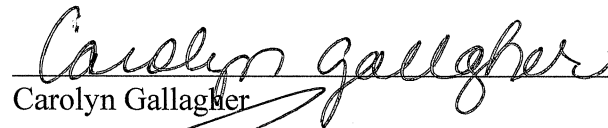
Respectfully Submitted,

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



Dan Sheedy, Chairperson

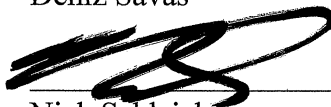
Sheri Cohen, Vice-Chairperson



Carolyn Gallagher



Deniz Savas



Nick Schleicher

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