



# Northbridge Public Schools

## Northbridge School Committee

87 Linwood Avenue, Whitinsville, Massachusetts 01588 (508) 234-8156 FAX (508) 234-8469 [www.nps.org](http://www.nps.org)

Shannon Canoy, Chairperson, [scanoy@nps.org](mailto:scanoy@nps.org), Jill Leonard, Vice-Chair, [jleonard@nps.org](mailto:jleonard@nps.org),  
Heather Alden, [halden@nps.org](mailto:halden@nps.org), Jonathan Canoy, [jcanoy@nps.org](mailto:jcanoy@nps.org), Carl Cowen,  
[ccowen@nps.org](mailto:ccowen@nps.org)

### Northbridge Public Schools School Committee Meeting Agenda Tuesday, January 23rd, 2024 7:00PM Northbridge High School Media Center

- I. Call to Order (7:00PM)
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Attendance
- Jill Leonard Present
- Jonathan Canoy Present
- Heather Alden Present
- Shannon Canoy Present
- Carl Cowen Present

Also in attendance were Superintendent Amy McKinstry and Director of Business and Finance Melissa Walker

- IV. Statement of Audio and Video Recording
- V. Statement of Mission
- VI. Student Representative Report (7:05PM)

Unable to attend

- VII. Superintendent's Report (7:10PM)

We are officially now in Quarter 3. Report cards will be available on Monday January 29<sup>th</sup> for all schools. February 6<sup>th</sup> is 100<sup>th</sup> day of school. Staff and students at NES deck themselves in 100 year old garb. Asking every grade level to collect 100 non-perishable food items for the NES Food Pantry between February 5<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>. Info on 100<sup>th</sup> day celebration will be going out to the parents in the newsletter. NES PreK lottery opening to new families on February 1<sup>st</sup>. Open house to meet the team, see the school and learn about

The Northbridge Public Schools ensures equal employment and educational opportunities for its employees and students and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex or sexual orientation, gender identity (M.G.L. c. 151B and 151C, Title VI, Title VII and Title IX), or on the basis of disability (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973/ADA) or homelessness. In addition, the Northbridge Public Schools does not discriminate against its employees on the basis of age (M.G.L. 151B/ADEA) on the basis of veteran's status, or genetic information.

the curriculum on February 10<sup>th</sup>. Kindergarten registration for students not enrolled in our PreK opens February 28<sup>th</sup>. More information on the NES Facebook Page.

Middle School holding 7<sup>th</sup> Grade social January 26<sup>th</sup> right after school until 3:30. Admission \$5. Community Closet will be open January 24<sup>th</sup> from 2:15PM-4:15PM. Looking to adjust Title I and IV funding to open the Closet more frequently. Have a lot of clothing and boots heading to the closet from the lost and found no one has claimed. Amy McKinstry, Susan Palmer-Howes, and Scott Connery met with a representative from the Anti-Defamation league to talk about implementing the “No Place for Hate” Programming. Each school will be doing 3 activities that educate students about combating racism and bias. Leadership team getting more education around this too. These activities will happen during the WIN and Advisory blocks. First will be done before the end of February, with the other two coming in 6 week intervals afterwards.

January 18<sup>th</sup>, Worcester County Superintendent’s Association had a joint meeting with the local legislators (representatives and state senators), 18 legislators were there. Talked about pressing issues in districts and education. Talked about Chronic Absenteeism, need to increase Chapter 70 budgets, Circuit Breakers, rising cost of Special Education and Special Education Transportation and out of district tuition, and we need the state to find a better way to fund the schools. Need to provide more incentives for students in college to become teachers. All teachers must get their Master’s Degree, and they have 5 years to do so. If they are barely able to make ends meet with base teacher pay, it is very hard to pay for and complete a Master’s degree. Also need more students to go into the more specialized fields, such as special education.

Monday and Tuesday of next week interviewing about 50 high school students as part of “Portrait of a Graduate”. About 400 out of 435 students responded to the survey. A lot of them wanted some “Back to Basics” classes: Finances, taxes, woodshop, cooking, home economy. The interview students stated they were willing to be video taped during the interview to be able to have their words be part of the Strategic Planning.

Matching up Buddy Tutors currently.

Jill Leonard – Community Closet: are they in need of a lot of things, is it used often? It is used very often and the type of outfits available are different depending on the times of year.

Has cool weather, warm weather, prom, costume, and formal clothing. A lot of people come in for Winter Clothing.

Heather Alden – Happy about trying to add the “back to Basics” in. The vocational schools are no longer serving the populations they used to, and a lot of students are looking for both the vocational and basic life skills education they no longer have access too. Understands that it might be hard to bring back some of the programs.

We have the rooms, but it would require some reallocation.

#### VIII. Presentations (7:15 PM)

##### A. Superintendent’s Mid-Cycle Progress Presentation

Professional Practice Goals, Year 2: Enhance Leadership skills, Provide more in house HR and Legal Resource Support. Has completed 6 law classes total, 3 of them between July 1<sup>st</sup> and December 6<sup>th</sup> with a grade of 97+.

Participating in the leading Now Program, the first year of which will end in July 2024. Currently a free, national program. Getting a broader view of issues and perspective, connection network, 1:1 coaching, and group problem solving. Also gaining insight and help on Public Engagement, communication during crises, leading in Politically Charged environments. This will cost money after the first year, if she chooses to stay with it.

M.A.S.S. Mid-Winter meeting January 24/25<sup>th</sup> ‘Navigating the educational landscape: Developing Political acumen.’

Participating in a book club through Leading Now: Currently reading *High Conflict: Why we get trapped and how we get out by*, Amanda Ripley.

AASA National Conference February 14-17. 5 Superintendents from Blackstone Valley going.

Student Learning Goals: Yondr pouches and cell phone policy. From the Survey, students wished the schools didn’t have the Yondr pouch policy. Staff Surveys say they are happy with it. Have done half year surveys and will do end of year surveys, as the grant requires it, but will also share the information with the School Committee, and use the information to review and revise the Yondr policy.

Attendance comparison from first half of this year to first half of last year. Increased attendance in both the Middle School (over 2%) and High School (Over 1%). Is statistically impactful.

The Northbridge Public Schools ensures equal employment and educational opportunities for its employees and students and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex or sexual orientation, gender identity (M.G.L. c. 151B and 151C, Title VI, Title VII and Title IX), or on the basis of disability (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973/ADA) or homelessness. In addition, the Northbridge Public Schools does not discriminate against its employees on the basis of age (M.G.L. 151B/ADEA) on the basis of veteran's status, or genetic information.

Behavior comparison in the same time period. Middle School reported 1/6<sup>th</sup> less incidence during the school day, and High School reported nearly 1/4<sup>th</sup> less incidence during the school day.

Failure comparison rate for Quarter 1. Middle School had 50% less failed classes. High School down 33% of failed classes. Once Q2 is finalized, anxious to see what the information says for this year, as last year failures increased between Q1 and Q2.

Student Participation in class as polled by the teachers: Over 60% said there has been significant increase in student participation, just under 40% saw a partial increase in participation, and none said there was no difference or a decrease in student participation. Jill Leonard commented that this is the most significant, because it shows there is only an increase in student participation across the board, and that increased participation will lead to the increase in grades, decrease of failures and incidents, and increase in attendance.

District Improvement Goal: Sent invites for the next Design Team for the new 3 Year District Strategic Plan. 10 Parent Volunteers to start designing the vision of what we want. Collaborating with Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce to get feedback from local businesses to see what they want from the high school graduates and students within their industries. Will also be creating a survey called “Portrait of an educator” to know what we expect from the educators and what we want from them to do best for our students. Design Team will meet February 5<sup>th</sup>, will include parents, staff, and students. Finalize draft of District Strategic Plan over February Break with Leadership Team. SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis with Leadership team over February Break. Full Strategic Planning Committee starts first full week of March. New 3 Year plan presented to School Committee in June.

Additionally: President of Worcester County Superintendents Association, Active member of Blackstone Valley Superintendent’s Consortium, active board member of the Southern Worcester County Educational collaborative and member of the finance sub-committee, Member of M.A.S.S. Executive committee representing Worcester County, Currently providing Staff members at SWCEC with Curriculum and Instruction PD free of charge so they will provide our staff with specialized Special Education PD for no cost. Working with Middle School ELA department (all new to district) to revise, write, and implement new curriculum units. Working to revise middle school and high school schedules with building

The Northbridge Public Schools ensures equal employment and educational opportunities for its employees and students and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex or sexual orientation, gender identity (M.G.L. c. 151B and 151C, Title VI, Title VII and Title IX), or on the basis of disability (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973/ADA) or homelessness. In addition, the Northbridge Public Schools does not discriminate against its employees on the basis of age (M.G.L. 151B/ADEA) on the basis of veteran's status, or genetic information.

admin to allow for more collaboration and smother transitions to increase the opportunities for the schools and grades to work together.

Jill Leonard asked if Amy was able to use the information from her classes so far. Yes, has helped with revising suspension policy, special education class helped her assist Kate and staff when Kate is unavailable. Lawyer is still used when they are needed, but Amy can create the form/document herself and have them check it to make sure it is fine rather than us paying the hourly rate for them to create the form. Criminal Law and Family law classes have also come in handy with handling families and incidents that arise at the schools. Jill would be interested in discovering how many hours this has saved the district.

Shannon Canoy encouraged by the Yondr Pouches. Wants to see the reports for each quarter, but is very optimistic and encouraged by the data so far. At this time, additional funding and continuation of the grant is unknown, as the group needs to look at the data first to see how effective it has been. Yondr pouches are all over the news. Once all of the mid-year reports are in, Amy suspects the group will share the trend data from all the districts with everyone participating in the program. Hopes this will also increase MCAS scores. Jonathan Canoy asked if the information gathered can be sent to the students as well, to show them how much it is helping them. Amy wants to share the information with the parents to show them how much it is helping the students.

Consent Agenda (7:30PM)

B. School Committee Minutes 1-9-2023

C. Warrant 24-27 1/11/2024 \$219,618.30

D. Warrant 24-28 1/18/2024 \$ 46,139.21

A motion was made by Heather Alden to approve the Consent Agenda. It was seconded by Jonathan Canoy.

Jill Leonard	Yes
--------------	-----

Heather Alden	Yes
---------------	-----

Shannon Canoy	Yes
---------------	-----

Jonathan Canoy	Yes
----------------	-----

Carl Cowen	Yes
------------	-----

The motion was passed with a vote of 5-0

IX. Discussion (7:35PM)

The Northbridge Public Schools ensures equal employment and educational opportunities for its employees and students and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex or sexual orientation, gender identity (M.G.L. c. 151B and 151C, Title VI, Title VII and Title IX), or on the basis of disability (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973/ADA) or homelessness. In addition, the Northbridge Public Schools does not discriminate against its employees on the basis of age (M.G.L. 151B/ADEA) on the basis of veteran's status, or genetic information.

#### A. Superintendent's Mid-Cycle Progress Report

Already Shared. Asked if there was any more information the school committee wanted shared. Carl Cowen asked if the Grant goes away, what is the estimated cost? Amy stated we do not know. She had asked the group last year, and it was \$21,000 to implement the program initially. Asked if the grant is not continued, will the cost go down, and she was told it would drop significantly, but they do not have an estimate as to by how much it would drop. Was glad to hear that the amount of money is so small compared to the improvement it is having with the students. We would be paying for the license, and they replace the pouches. Would hate to see this go away after working so well for a year.

#### B. Preschool Tuition Rates 2024-2025

Changing preschool rates as they have not increased since the 2017-2018 school year. Information on other school districts around us and other programs were done as a mathematical approximation to what their 4 day program would be. Currently, we are on the very low end of full day programs. Looking to increase full day program to \$5,300, which is still on the lower end of the group. AM PreK to go up to \$2,900 from \$2,700, and PM to \$2,750 from \$2,502. PM is lower rate is because AM is favored program and are trying to give incentives to doing the PM program. Also giving incentive discount to pre-paying the tuition or paying it upfront rather than monthly.

Seems like a significant increase for full day, but is still on the low end. This increase also is in line if we had done a 3% increase annually. Also adds the question if the school district should institute a yearly small increase or stay at the same price for years before making a larger increase. Registration fee is currently \$25, looking to change it to \$50, which is on par with other districts around.

Lottery for PreK is coming up in February, wanting to do this earlier than the normal budgeting season so that when the parents put their children in for the lottery, they have the most up to date information on possible costs, and do not get blindsided.

Heather Alden asked why we would undervalue ourselves? The higher costing districts are that much better than our district. Is in agreement that we should do the yearly increase. Had a child who went through the program and it is a great program. We have a lot of people who want to come to the program because it is a good program, so there is no reason to stay near the low end of the cost pool, unless it would impact our numbers. Even at a full day

rate, parents are paying half that per month (not year) to go to day-care. We should investigate if it will impact our numbers and what the overall impact it will be if we increase our cost even more.

Jill Leonard wanted to know if we can provide the cost comparison information to parents if they ask about the cost increase to show that we are still lower than most of the districts around. Melissa confirmed that the information is in the packet and available for the parents. The good thing about public school pre-k is that they must be trained and get their masters, while private ones do not have to follow that model for teachers. Wants to be fair with the increases, but still affordable. Keeping town demographics in mind. Did not go up over the past 6 years, but 19-20 had the shutdown, and 20-21 and 21-22 didn't increase because of having to adjust. Wants to know what the committee feels about listing the anticipated rates to make the parents aware of the increase.

If we have the same general breakdown of students this next year with the increase (about 30-35 full day, 12 both AM and PM), this is about a \$40K revenue increase. Plans are to do the summer program again because it was a success this past year. Asked for a consensus to posting the Anticipated Rate in the pamphlet for the Lottery.

Committee is comfortable with the Anticipated Rate being posted, but the final rate will be voted on 2<sup>nd</sup> week of February.

X. Public Comment (7:45 PM)

XI. Action

A. Capital Plan

Field repairs moved to next year as we did not get a quote yet for pricing and the plan is due on January 24<sup>th</sup>. Cannot add the item to the budget without an exact number.

A motion was made by Heather Alden to approve the Capital Plan. It was seconded by Jonathan Canoy.

Jill Leonard	Yes
Heather Alden	Yes
Shannon Canoy	Yes
Jonathan Canoy	Yes
Carl Cowen	Yes

The motion was passed with a vote of 5-0

The Northbridge Public Schools ensures equal employment and educational opportunities for its employees and students and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex or sexual orientation, gender identity (M.G.L. c. 151B and 151C, Title VI, Title VII and Title IX), or on the basis of disability (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973/ADA) or homelessness. In addition, the Northbridge Public Schools does not discriminate against its employees on the basis of age (M.G.L. 151B/ADEA) on the basis of veteran's status, or genetic information.

## XII. Information

### A. Yondr Stats - MS/HS

Already talked about earlier

### B. Early PTS

Granted Early Professional Teacher Status to Kylie Farrel, 2<sup>nd</sup> year Physical Education Teacher. Has done an outstanding job building relationships with the students and made a lot of new and exciting units for the students. We want her to stay. Was handed to her personally by Amy.

## XIII. Adjournment (8:15 PM)

A motion was made by Heather Alden to Adjourn. It was seconded by Jonathan Canoy.

Jill Leonard	Yes
--------------	-----

Heather Alden	Yes
---------------	-----

Shannon Canoy	Yes
---------------	-----

Jonathan Canoy	Yes
----------------	-----

Carl Cowen	Yes
------------	-----

The motion was passed with a vote of 5-0

**Note: The listing of matters are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law. Also, the timeframe for each topic is a general guideline and may not be strictly adhered to.**