



# Northbridge Public Schools

## Northbridge School Committee

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Steven Falconer, Chairperson, [stfalconer@nps.org](mailto:stfalconer@nps.org)  
Brian Paulhus, Kathryn Atchue, Allan Richards, Erin Donahue

### Northbridge Public Schools School Committee Meeting Tuesday, November 23, 2021 7:00PM Northbridge High School Media Center

- I. Call to Order (7:00)
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Attendance

Steven Falconer	Present
Brian Paulhus	Absent
Allan Richards	Present
Kathryn Atchue	Absent
Erin Donahue	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. Public Comment
- VII. Student Representative Report

Student Representative Christopher Rivelli provided an update, including that student ID's are not available in the main office. He asked students to please stop by at their next available convenience to pick them up. Boys' varsity football plays on Thanksgiving Day at 10:00 am against Uxbridge and tickets will be available for \$5.00 in the main office and \$10.00 at the gate. NHS played against Uxbridge in their first ESports competition and won 9-0. Winter sports registration will close on December 1<sup>st</sup> and the seasons will begin on 11/29 for high school and 12/6 for middle school. Christopher advised that the WIN block for NHS will change after Thanksgiving break and students should look out for an email. Progress reports will be approaching soon and teachers have a flexible schedule for extra help. He reminded of the parent teacher conferences and the food drive that raised 100 canned goods and 10 turkeys for the Student Council Food Drive.

#### VIII. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Amy McKinstry provided an update on the district, beginning with the combined workshop with Family Continuity, the Whittin Community Center, and the Rockdale Youth Center. This workshop focused on student self-identity and was attended by four families. It was a more interactive session and they had the idea to start a town hall question and answer. The next one is on December 15<sup>th</sup> and will focus on self-harm and suicidal ideation. Amy advised that the district advisory council reconvened and is made up of students, staff, and parents. They just held their first meeting. Amy received notice from DESE that the high school internship program will continue and the district is looking to double the amount of students participating. She submitted a grant to DESE for SEL and mental health, looking to acquire an SEL coordinator and stipends for PBIS coaches for buildings. Today, Amy, Bill Bishop, and Aaron Katz started working on another grant focused on providing support to students at risk of dropping out. Amy reminded that parent teacher conferences are coming up and there will be a half day.

## IX. Presentations

### A. Italy/Greece Trip 2022 – Mr. Sponseller

Scott Sponseller provided an update on the upcoming Italy and Greece trip. He is looking for approval of the School Committee to approve an excused absence for the one day of school students would miss. The trip is scheduled from April 14<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>, during April break. There were originally 70-75 students enrolled, however it is down to 30 enrolled. EF Tours is mandating that all students be fully vaccinated to attend this trip and must sign a Covid-19 agreement and be tested before departing and returning, while wearing masks throughout the trip. Scott answered questions regarding refunds.

### B. NES Update – Mr. Hoffman and Mrs. Ross

Co-Principal of NES, Nick Hoffman started providing an update. Items in the building that need to be fixed our bought have decreased greatly and most have been addressed. Staffing is almost full with only 3 positions left to fill, however they do expect upcoming long-term substitute positions to open soon due to maternity leaves. There will be a vaccine clinic on Wednesday, December 8<sup>th</sup> and more information will come on that. They are holding weekly PBIS celebrations where students get to come down and sign the cafeteria windows and are holding their first winter raffle for the kids. Arrival and dismissal procedures continue to improve and the playground for Pre-K, grades 1, and grades 2 will most likely be ready this week, as they needed to add drainage. Co-Principal Karlene Ross advised that they have started having outside field trips come in such as a puppet show, fairytale parade, and pilgrims from Plymouth Plantation. They are very excited about the music program at NES with a 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade chorus and a 5<sup>th</sup> grade band. This is the first week the whole ensemble has come together. Karlene went over the success with ST Math and advised that every grade met their goals. The family community team meets once per month and picks up projects. They are creating breakfast and lunch baskets for students in need over winter break. 12 baskets have been received from the Boy Scouts, and the staff and families have raised \$500.00.

### C. SEPAC Update

Sara Guerra advised that SEPAC has been running, even over the summer and it is her third year as chairperson. They are currently doing virtual meetings and no in-person meetings based on family feedback. Meetings are held the first Wednesday of every month and Greg Rosenthal holds monthly informal update meetings then. The third Wednesday is their official business meeting and it is recorded on Zoom. In October the decision was made that the Open Meeting Law no longer applies to SEPAC and they can run as an advisory board. At their last meeting the looked at their bylaws and looked at what may need to change. At the end of each meeting there is a 15-30 minute support group style set-up where it is just parents and people who are normally reluctant to speak out can feel more invited to do so. The focus this year is getting back to the business of SEPAC, focusing a lot on Covid-19, access issues, how to make this easier on the kids. She would like to have better communication and more participation and suggested more meetings with the leadership team and SEPAC, and to balance reactive and proactive responses. She raised the concerns brought up such as communication from the district to parents and vice versa, transportation for kids with special needs, the IEP process, and reading interventions and direct services.

## X. Consent Agenda

### A. School Committee Meeting Minutes from November 9, 2021

### B. Warrant 42-20s 11/10/2021 \$486,954.98

A motion was made by Erin Donahue to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Allan Richards.

Steven Falconer	Yes
Brian Paulhus	Absent
Allan Richards	Yes
Kathryn Atchue	Absent
Erin Donahue	Yes

3 members having voted in the affirmative

0 members having voted in the negative

The motion was accepted with a roll call vote of 3-0.

## XI. Action Items

### A. FY23 Budget Parameters/Timeline

A motion was made by Allan Richards to approve the FY23 budget parameters and timeline. The motion was seconded by Erin Donahue.

Steven Falconer	Yes
Brian Paulhus	Absent
Allan Richards	Yes
Kathryn Atchue	Absent
Erin Donahue	Yes

3 members having voted in the affirmative

0 members having voted in the negative

The motion was accepted with a roll call vote of 3-0.

## XII. Discussion

### A. Northbridge Playground and Recreation Letter of Support (Linwood Courts)

Steven Falconer received an email from the Community Preservation Committee for a letter of support from School Committee regarding their application to have the Linwood basketball courts re-done. This will be an action item at the next meeting.

### B. ESSER III Spending Plan

The primary goal with the ESSER III grant would be to address learning loss and the impacts of Covid-19 on students. The requirements for this was that an implementation plan had to be put together and publicized as well as include their return to in-person learning plan. 20% has been used for mitigating lost instructional time and there will be more going towards that. The majority will be going into mental health support, nursing staff, and custodial staff. It will also go towards permanent substitutes in the buildings, remediation, enrichment, summer programming, and professional development for staff, parent and family workshops, culture building for the staff and families to re-engage after Covid-19. This will be utilized over the course of three years.

## XIII. Information

### A. First Quarter grade comparisons (MS/HS) 2020 v. 2021

Amy McKinstry pointed out the differences in grades, finding that the greatest difference is the amount of students failing one course versus two. The number of students failing two courses has gone down significantly since last year. The WIN block and freshman academy has been helping and the freshman students are enjoying it. The grant that Amy, Bill, and Aaron are working on will address academic issues as well. Some of the issues currently are still engagement, however the numbers are positive.

## XIV. School Committee Individual Comments

## XV. Adjournment (8:15)

A motion was made by Erin Donahue to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Allan Richards.

Steven Falconer	Yes
Brian Paulhus	Absent
Allan Richards	Yes
Kathryn Atchue	Absent

It is the policy of the Northbridge Public Schools not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, or homelessness in its educational programs, services, activities, or employment.

Erin Donahue

Yes

3 members having voted in the affirmative

0 members having voted in the negative

The motion was accepted with a roll call vote of 3-0.

Note: The listings 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.