



# 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, December 14, 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	Present
Allan Richards	Present
Kathryn Atchue	Present
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

Beth Dumouchel of 34 Willow Street spoke and advised she is grateful to be seeing changes in the student pick-up and drop-off line but would like more positive communication to the parents. There is very little understanding and communication to parents about being made aware of training and quicker drop-off procedures. Beth touched upon welcome routines and rituals including brain breaks and optimistic closure. She also advised it is important to not minimize parent's pursuits. She also brought up the issue taken up about negativity at a previous School Committee meeting and shared the positive things she has done to contribute to the district. Beth advised the culture of the district needs to be addressed and that there is an obligation of the School Committee to assess citizens desires and that they have the authority to exercise best judgement to carry out their responsibility and intent to maintain two-way communication with the community. The progress and problems of the district should be publicized. She asked the education to improve and advised she comes to School Committee meetings because emails go unanswered.

Brandon King of 75 Sheryl Drive advised he recently attended an IEP meeting with Michelle Bastien and stated that everything went great and he thought Michelle was a great presence and took all of his concerns into account. The only thing he noticed was that children can age out of different aid groups and that children have peers based on age level, which is deemed by the state. He feels that with some ages and students, their numerical age doesn't align them with their peers and used the example that if he was stuck in a room with scientists or physicists they would not be his peers because they have nothing in common. He feels that with that dynamic, the student seems to be pushed forward regardless of academic progression. His son is aging out of a group, and even though he is improving, he aging out could be a detriment to his advancement. Cognitively he is in a younger group, but being put in an older bracket may be challenging for him and over challenging can cause a loss of willingness to learn.

- VII. Student Representative Report

Student Representative Christopher Rivelli started his report by listing the students of the month. He advised

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that tomorrow is the NHS holiday concert starting at 7:00 pm and people should go to support the senior band members participating. Winter sports kicked off and Christopher went over the different scores for the sports. Basketball will open up their season tonight and they will host Quaboag on Friday. The NHS ESports team is coming off of a championship win and ice hockey has their first official game on Saturday against Foxborough. They will now compete in Division three. The student council sponsored a winter door decorating contest and the doors will remain decorated through winter break. The best team will earn gift cards. He stated a reminder that silent reading block and rams block has been switched and that the community closet is open for holiday shopping on December 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. The link for the schedule was included on the NPS website.

## VIII. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Amy McKinstry started her report by reminding that the NMS holiday concert was taking place and that she attended a performance during the school day and it was fabulous. She commended the new music teacher Mr. Mello for their chorus sounding professional. He even made a school song. There will be a parent workshop tomorrow night at the Rockdale Youth Center and the Whitinsville Community Center will be offering free babysitting during the workshop, if parents are interested in attending. The community closet partnered with the District Advisory Council to do a gift and toy drive and will be offering holiday shopping tomorrow and Thursday at the community closet. The Blackstone Valley Supers Consortium is offering 5 new night courses to any high school student in participating districts starting second semester. They will take place at different schools and include classes in video game design, manufacturing, and video labs. NHS band students will be visiting NES with a goal to build up the band program. There have been changes to the NES dismissal. Mr. Hoffman and Mrs. Ross discussed this at the last School Committee meeting and they have been finishing by 2:55 pm and continuing to improve. Students have been in the building by 8:25 am. Regarding Covid-19, through what's on your mind survey, Amy reviewed concerns and provided an explanation on the test and stay program and protocols. In addition to that, she advised that all of the protocols are located on the website. Amy went over the positivity rates in Northbridge versus the surrounding towns. NPS has the highest student Covid-19 positivity rate of 9 schools in Blackstone valley consortium, and the 2nd highest staff Covid-19 rate. She Provided information surrounding vaccine rates, and as of November 18th, vaccination rates in students age 5-11 for first dose is the lowest at 6%, for ages 12-15 we are the lowest with 56% and then ages 16-19 is the second lowest with 72%. Overall, for citizens 20 or older that are fully vaccinated, we are at 68%, the lowest rate in Blackstone valley. Amy asks everyone to participate in a brief moment of silence for the anniversary of Sandy Hook.

## IX. Presentations

### A. High School Update

Eric Tracey provided an update on the high school. The freshman academy has reported that first quarter failures are down significantly from the previous year. Freshman Fall Funfest was held on October 29<sup>th</sup> and students and staff had burgers, hotdogs, and hot chocolate. They played games, did crafts, and did karaoke. The academy is planning more options for field trips in late winter or early spring. The NHS ESports team won the state championships for Super Smash Brothers. The Smith brothers Chris, Patrick, and Matthew along with teammate Chip Gagner defeated Mannachog high school for the championship title. There were 8 students who participated in BVExcel which is advanced courses offered through the Blackstone valley Education Foundation Ed Hub. The biggest interest for NHS students has been in welding. Mr. Katz reorganized the Program of Studies to align our innovation pathways. The realignment mirrors the current state model for pathways. In the near future, Thermo Fisher Scientific will be coming to talk to students in the Health Science Pathway. Superintendent Amy McKinstry and Principal William Bishop applied for and received a \$20,000 grant for dropout prevention and re-engagement. Eric finished by providing an update on the tardiness discipline procedures. There were 170 students who made up 344 tardies in the one week before Thanksgiving. Since the new procedures were put in place, there were only 107 students who made up 183 tardies.

## X. Consent Agenda

### A. School Committee Meeting Minutes from November 23, 2021

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- B. Warrant 42-22s 12/9/2021 \$376,142.43
- C. Wrestling Donation
- D. Hockey Donation
- E. NES Food Pantry Donation

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

Steven Falconer	Yes
Brian Paulhus	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Kathryn Atchue	Yes
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 5-0.

## XI. Action Items

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

A motion was made by Erin Donahue to approve the writing of a Northbridge Playground and recreation letter of support for the Linwood courts. The motion was seconded by Brian Paulhus.

Steven Falconer	Yes
Brian Paulhus	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Kathryn Atchue	Yes
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 5-0.

## II. Discussion

### A. District Snow Plowing

George Simmons, Melissa Walker, and Amy McKinstry met last week regarding snow plowing and it has been an ongoing discussion. George Simmons advised that the equipment needed for snow blowing at the new building that was ordered with the new building project, will not be coming until May. Currently George is looking for a private business to help because if the district does not have enough equipment or coverage, this could cause a delay to be called at NES. Unfortunately, the shipping is not something that they can control right now. The equipment that was processed to order for snow removal was made by John Deer and they have gone on strike, which caused the delivery date to move from February to May. There is a concern that they would not be able to make it to NES in time to clear all of the snow. George spoke to the DPW but they can't guarantee that they would be able to get to the school in time, and he wants to make it public that if there are delays, this conflict could be why. Erin Donahue asked what private contractors are lined up to look into and the response was that they are waiting on two more prices. Once those are in there will be a discussion. The funds will come out of the facilities budget or line items could be moved. The impact on the budget can vary dramatically, and Melissa advised she is looking to shuffle within maintenance line items if there is a cancellation. It is just a matter of timing, smaller amounts that add up would require contractors to come in. If there is a lot of snow, it may have to go outside of the maintenance lines.

### III. Information

#### A. Cancellation of 12/28/2021 School Committee Meeting

### IV. School Committee Individual Comments

### V. Adjournment (8:00)

A motion was made by Erin Donahue to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Kathryn Atchue.

Steven Falconer	Yes
Brian Paulhus	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Kathryn Atchue	Yes
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 5-0.

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.

**Student and Staff COVID cases from 9/13/21 – 12/8/21:**

District	Student	Staff	Enrollment
Bellingham	128	13	1,980
Douglas	40	11	1,180
Grafton	103	17	3,138
Hopedale	32	12	1,114
Milford	108	23	4,309
Millbury	85		1,601
Northbridge		24	1,975
Sutton	66	17	1,209
Uxbridge	104	14	1,626

	5-11 % 1 <sup>st</sup> dose	12 – 15 % 1 <sup>st</sup> dose	16 – 19 % 1 <sup>st</sup> dose	20+ % fully dosed
Bellingham	8%	62%		72%
Douglas			77%	69%
Grafton	19%	83%	93%	79%
Hopedale	14%	76%	95%+	87%
Milford	26%	95%+	95%+	83%
Millbury	10%	73%		79%
Northbridge			72%	
Sutton	12%	79%	80%	80%
Uxbridge	7%	66%	76%	

- As of 11-18-21