



Northbridge Public Schools

Northbridge School Committee

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Steven Falconer, Chairperson, stfalconer@nps.org
Brian Paulhus, Kathryn Atchue, Allan Richards, Erin Donahue

Northbridge Public Schools School Committee Meeting Tuesday, January 11, 2022 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. There is a science field trip to the Boston Aquarium open to all students on January 12th and on January 26th the freshman academy students will be going on a field trip to Boda Borg Quest Center. This is a trip that will put their problem solving skills to the test as they complete tasks or quests. The acceptance wall is growing at NHS and it is a place where students can see their names underneath the schools that they have been admitted to. It shows the hard work and dedication that NHS students put into being accepted into college. They welcomed three new staff members, Mrs. Rossman, an engineering teacher, Mr. Greco, the new health and wellness teacher, and Mrs. Dabney, the new world language teacher. The Ski club has started up for this year as well.

VIII. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Amy McKinstry started her report with an update from the commissioner. He has extended the mask mandate through February 28th, 2022 and will be reviewing it again at the end of January. However, the rules regarding 80% vaccination rates in schools will still apply. The current rates at the high school are 68% the middle school is 56%, and there is no data on the elementary school yet as they have just started. Last year on this date there were 3 positive staff members and 10 close contacts. Today there are 17 positive staff members and 1 close contact. Last year on this date there were 12 positive cases in students, this year there is 79. She continues to urge students and staff to refrain from coming to school if they are not feeling well. Amy addressed concerns she received over email regarding the mask mandate for preschool and reminded that this Friday is a professional development day for staff and no school for students, and went over what the staff would be doing. The buddy tutor programming will be restarting this month and at least 35 high school students have volunteered. Student sign ups were sent out on ConnectEd last night for students needing extra help. There will be a Covid-19 vaccination clinic at NHS on Saturday from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm for individuals age 12 and older. There will be a parent workshop at NES on Tuesday, January 18th called Understanding Behavior as Communication. Thursday, January 20th is the last day of the second quarter and report cards will be sent home and available January 24th. The NHS and NMS food pantries

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are in full swing.

IX. Presentations

A. NHS E-Sports

ELA Teacher and ESports advisor, Christopher Miller, along with team member Patrick Smith presented on the ESports organization. ESports at NHS was recently started and they were able to put together a very competitive team to participate in the Massachusetts Smash Brothers tournament. They use a platform called Play Versus which helps create leagues for teams to compete in. This is a great opportunity for students who don't have the opportunity to compete in traditional athletics and is up and coming. The Smith brothers pushed for the league to be created and Patrick advised that ESports will be trending to become a larger part of schools, and says they could be winning more championships in the future. They went on to discuss the different equipment needed to participate in these events and what goes into them. He also spoke on trying to get the word out for next year.

B. PPS Update

Pupil Personnel Services Director Greg Rosenthal provided an update. The NHS unified sports basketball ended in November and the kids had a great time participating with others in the region. They tried to start up a unified bowling league but there was little interest from other towns, however they are still considering it for the future. The RISE program at NHS has promoted their cookie treats to help fund their social events such as BBQs and luncheons. Across the district, NMS and NES have a new curriculum for RISE to help students with pre-vocational working. The pilot of the program has been very successful. The ELL department welcomed 12 new students this year and met as a group to meet the needs of the students. Last month, SEPAC had their meeting and Allan Richards attended. The focus of this last meeting was about budget, emphasizing social emotional learning, and reading interventions. They are looking to do a family event in April and planning has started. Greg provided a Co-teaching PD update and an update on the 3 year plan that was coordinated with Jill Healy. Champions have each met with an outside consultant to continue working on lesson planning. For the extended school year, Russel Cron will be back and they are already starting to schedule planning meetings. An update on the Wilson contract is that there is a new contract with them for the introductory course. They did not have a trainer available until the spring, and the practicum will be next year. It is paid for out of special education grant funds and will be in place before the end of the school year.

X. Consent Agenda

A. School Committee Meeting Minutes from December 14, 2021

B. Warrant 42-24s 12/9/2021 \$355,668.04

C. Warrant 42-26s 12/23/2021 \$517,478.21

D. Warrant 42-28s 1/06/2022 \$251,704.91

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

I. Discussion

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.

A. District Snow Plowing – Update

Melissa Walker advised that they went to the School Building Committee to inquire about helping the district out with the costs of getting a vendor for snow plowing. They have found a vendor that will be coming in to help with cleaning snow.

B. Five Year Capital Plan: FY2023-FY2027

Melissa Walker discussed the 2 projects that fell under FY23 and were funded by grants. These included the cafeteria tables and LED lighting upgrades at the high school. They will be getting new rectangular tables at the middle school with fixed chairs. They will be adding security cameras at the middle and high school to address blind spots. Next year the focus will be to replace low quality and old cameras. At the high school they are looking to replace the intercom and clocks due to the condition of the current system, and the clocks not working as they should. There were two items added for 2023 and 2024 and these include network switches for the middle and high school.

C. Closing Grade 8 – School Choice

Amy McKinstry advised that the current grade eight is the largest class of approximately 180 students. John Diorio asked to close grade eight to school choice. However, students who move or reside in the town and enroll over the course of the year are still able to.

II. Information

A. COVID Data Across State

III. School Committee Individual Comments

IV. Adjournment (8:00)

A motion was made by Allan Richards to adjourn. 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.

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.