



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 25, 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	Present
Allan Richards	Absent
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
- VII. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Amy McKinstry provided an update starting with the high school. The freshman academy will be attending a field trip to Boda Borg tomorrow. She advised that NHS was awarded the promising practices grant for after school remediation and credit recovery. There will be positions posted for this. She reminded that NHS extended their margin period for grading by 2 days and grades will be available January 26th. The spectator restrictions for athletics have been lifted at this time but the mask mandate is still in effect for players and spectators. Amy congratulated Lisa Gogolinski and Betsy Wermuth for being chosen as panelists for the BBEF series for workplace learning, DESE also applauded them. 8 of Mrs. Wermuth's students will be participating in bridge testing tomorrow and have constructed 4 bridges. Thursday NMS will be hosting the National Juniors Honors Society induction ceremony and it will be the first year they will have their own chapter. NMS and NES will be hosting February vacation academies and the buddy tutor program is currently underway. The district was awarded the 613 grant for SEL and mental health and there is a continuation grant for this. Amy continued to go over the current Covid-19 test protocols and advised that families can now opt-in to at home testing for their student regardless of vaccination status/ Symptomatic testing will continue if student was given consent by family. Amy addressed concerns over students sitting at different lunch tables when returning from quarantine. They are not segregating or punishing students but are allowing students to sit together if they have returned from quarantine, or 6 ft. apart. She apologized for the lack of communication.

VIII. Presentations

A. SEPAC – Goals and Initiatives (New President: Brandon King)

Brandon King, the newly elected president of NSEPC reported that there have been significant changes in SEPAC. Sara Guerra has stepped down as the previous president and they have restructured and filled all of the previously vacant roles. He advised that the presentation being given was a group effort from the SEPAC members and thanked all of the members who stepped up. There was a lot of confusion surrounding isolation with post-positive and post-

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isolation policies. There was concern about students not knowing what was going on, causing distress. The lack of communication made it challenging for students to understand what was happening. SEPAC would like to see a policy put in place regarding isolation and communication that is all encompassing and not just for Covid-19. The community feels concern regarding backlash of speaking up to administration and these issues were brought up anonymously. Erin Donahue asked if SEPAC had tools to help students understand these policies and Brandon advised that parents would understand their students' needs best. They can understand certain things and present them in a specific way but they need communication that allows them time to prepare them.

B. Superintendent's Mid-Cycle Progress Report

Superintendent Amy McKinstry gave a presentation where she discussed her progress and what she has done to meet her student learning goal, professional practice goal, and district improvement goal. The full presentation was not visible as Amy was speaking and the detailed presentation is included at the end of the minutes.

IX. Consent Agenda

A. School Committee Meeting Minutes from January 11, 2022

B. Warrant 42-30s 1/20/2022 \$155,066.67

C. Chris Miller's English Class Donation

A motion was made by Kathryn Atchue to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Erin Donahue.

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

4 members having voted in the affirmative

0 members having voted in the negative

The motion was accepted with a roll call vote of 4-0.

X. Action Items

A. Five Year Capital Plan: FY2023-FY2027

A motion was made by Kathryn Atchue to approve the five year capital plan. The motion was seconded by Erin Donahue.

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

4 members having voted in the affirmative

0 members having voted in the negative

The motion was accepted with a roll call vote of 4-0.

II. Discussion

A. Budget Timeline Update

Amy provided a chart that detailed the timeline for the budget. Currently they are almost done with reviewing the binders and are waiting for a few things from one of the schools. They will have budget subcommittee meetings to

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share that. February 15th is the large meeting with the School Committee, managers, administration where they will inform them as to what to expect. There will then be a budget subcommittee meeting before the March 8th recommended budget date. March 9th is being held for financial communications. Steven Falconer advised the public that they modified the timeline to extend into March in order to give them time to gather all of the necessary information.

III. Information

IV. School Committee Individual Comments

V. Adjournment (8:00)

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

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

4 members having voted in the affirmative

0 members having voted in the negative

The motion was accepted with a roll call vote of 4-0.

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.

Superintendent's Mid-Year Progress Report

January 25, 2022

Professional Practice Goal: In order to support the district's goal of creating an environment of *shared leadership*, I will **provide consistent and ongoing professional development on effective leadership** (*Strategic Initiative #1*) to all building administrators to “create an environment in which all leaders include multiple perspectives to collaborate on common goals and develop consistent and equitable practices and expectations that support the alignment of our school and the success of the entire NPS community.”

- Meet with LT (directors, principals and APs) every other Wednesday afternoon from 3 - 5 p.m.
- Administrators engaged in a “shadowing” experience. An administrator from one building shadows a fellow administrator (same role) in another building for a day to discuss job-alike issues and observe positive practices that should be common across schools, with time for follow-up discussion and visits.
- Weekly principal walk-throughs (one per week) to observe teaching and learning and discuss strategies for actionable feedback and follow-up, as well as building level professional development. During these meetings we also discuss human resource/union issues (if any), staffing concerns (if any), building operations (i.e. lunch, scheduling, duties, etc.), pending student discipline issues, and family/parent concerns.
- Aligning “dress code” at MS and HS - waiting for HS presentation to SC
- Developed and implemented WIN blocks across all schools to provide daily interventions

Student Learning Goal: Provide professional development and direct support to teacher-leaders, as well as building and district administrators to ensure the development and implementation of “engaging, inclusive and culturally proficient learning environments that nurture individual student growth and close access, academic and opportunity gaps through effective instructional practices, smooth transitions between grades and buildings, aligned curriculum, and robust student support” at each school.

- Conducted four days of PD in August with district, building and teacher-level leaders (inc. Directors, Principals/Asst. Principals, and department chairs/team leaders.) Topics included: Universal Design for Learning - what it is, why it matters, and how to observe it and provide feedback to teachers; implementing learning “stations” to increase engagement; having difficult conversations; identifying and addressing “problems of practice” in teaching and learning; and, promoting equity and diversity across the school district.
- Conducted another joint leadership meeting in December. Topics included: The roles and responsibilities of a “leader”; how to lead when your team is exhausted and you are too; review of strategic plan initiatives - what is urgent/what is important/how can we prioritize during COVID.
- All district, building and teacher leaders received the book **The Person You Mean to Be: How Good People Fight Bias** by Dolly Chugh and topics from the readings are being included in various meetings to start preparing for deeper work around Diversity, Equity and Inclusion next year.
- Weekly principal walk-throughs (one per week) to observe teaching and learning and discuss strategies for actionable feedback and follow-up, as well as building level professional development.
- Provided professional development on January 14th PD Day on **Student Engagement Strategies, Motivation and Differentiation** for teachers from all content areas grades 6-12.

District Improvement Goal #1: Create a more inclusive school and district culture that “offers diverse and meaningful opportunities for ALL families to engage with the schools and the district” (*Strategic Initiative #1 and #4 of Strategic Objective #2*) and also provides more opportunities for staff and students to be involved in the school community in meaningful ways as both participants and leaders.

- Public Forum re: mask mandate at beginning of year
- Offering mental health workshops for families, in conjunction with WCC/Rockdale Youth Center and FCP (Nov. - *The Search for Self-Identity and Acceptance*; Dec. - *Self-Harm and Suicidality*; Feb. - currently planning)
- Added students to the District Advisory Council for first time
- District Advisory Council - planning a spring event for parents/families
- DAC sponsored a toy and clothing drive for NMS Community Closet Christmas Shopping event
- HS students formed a group to review the HS dress code/policy and make recommendations for changes - will be presenting to SC on February 8th
- Established “champion” roles for UDL and co-teaching to extend leadership opportunities for staff members
- Collaborating with Pastor Bangma at Pleasant Street Church to provide after school/during vacations programming and support to NPS students

District Improvement Goal #2: Ensure the effective operations, management, positive culture and success of the students, staff, administration and families at the new Northbridge Elementary School.

- Met with NES administration weekly throughout summer and fall to: develop building schedule; create safety/evacuation plans; assign classrooms; student placement; staff open positions; establish lunch and recess protocols; develop parent drop-off and pick-up procedures; discuss roles and responsibilities of admin. team members and team leaders; developed a two-week module for the start of school to build camaraderie and teamwork across staff members and students in different grades and introduce students to the school and its protocols and procedures
- Continue to conduct weekly walk-throughs of NES building (with and without admins.)
- Meet frequently with building administrators to troubleshoot issues and discuss areas for improvement
- Weekly participation in OAC (trailer) meetings with OPM, architect and construction team

Instructional Leadership: Standard I

- Rounds with principals and follow-up feedback
- Developed professional practice goals with building principals and directors that address areas of growth that will improve teaching and learning
- Developed unified meeting agenda (for all LTs, CPTs, and PLCs) to keep a focus on teaching and learning improvement
- Developed and implemented Freshman Academy model. **Failures down from 85 to 43 (one course); 34 to 15 (two courses +); 62 to 25 (elective course) - for Q1.**
- Beginning review of IEPs at all schools/grade levels to ensure proper support and placement of all special education students/staff
- Provide continuous professional development for administration and teachers
- Continuous review of DSP goals and initiatives to measure progress or make appropriate adjustments
- After school and vacation remediation programs (ESSER)
- “Buddy Tutor” program - doubled capacity this year

Management & Operations: Standard II

- Created a new/updated district safety/emergency plan (approved by NPD and Fire)
- Updated all Medical Emergency Response Plans for each building (for DESE)
- Aligned/Aligning systems across all schools (SST, PBIS, WIN blocks, Connect/Pathways & Rise Programs, budget development)\
- Human resource management (hiring, termination, arbitration, grievances, staff discipline, public records requests, parent complaints, media relations)
- Negotiating five union contracts
- Development and management of FY budgets and multiple grants associated with COVID (ARPA, ESSERs, 613 - mental health, summer acceleration academies, summer school expansion, STEM co-op grant with Ed. Hub, public health grant)
- Capital articles and earmarks: technology improvements, security cameras
- Development of building schedules that maximize time in learning and include daily interventions and minimal transition time

Family & Community Engagement: Standard III

- Parent/family satisfaction survey
- District Advisory Council
- Mental Health Workshops with FCP, WCC/Rockdale Youth
- Partnership with Pleasant St. Church (*Open Door Program*)
- Adopted *S'More* newsletter system to provide translated information to all families who need it
- Family & School Partnership page on district website
- District FB and Twitter - as well as building level social media outlets
- District-wide calendar for ease of parent reference
- Daily emails/responses to parent questions/concerns
- "What's on Your Mind" survey
- Building-level parent meetings
- COVID Data Table to keep parents/community informed

Professional Culture: Standard IV

- Continued and timely responses to families/community members
- Classroom visits/observations and feedback to teachers
- Attendance at BOS meetings as requested to update town on state of schools
- Participation in MASS superintendent conferences and workshops
- Participation in AASA superintendent conferences
- Member of ASCD, AASA, MASS, BVSC, WCSA (President)
- Finishing 3rd year of NSIP
- Open communication with town officials and school committee members
- Bi-weekly meetings with district leadership team (building & district admin.)
- Bi-weekly cabinet meetings (district-level administration)