



# 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, September 28, 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

Jessica Ross of 217 Brookway Drive, a senior at Northbridge High School, spoke about her experience learning of the passing of former student Jordan Mahoney from another student at school. She was not given the opportunity to be told through her school or through her parents, but found out through talk in the hallways. Her sister graduated with Jordan and it was hard for her to hear the news. She felt that Jordan needed acknowledgement, as students needed comfort from their friends, staff, and teachers but the school failed to acknowledge the passing and students still felt alone. Jordan wanted to put together an announcement to be read in order to honor Jordan over the announcements. Jessica read the announcement she had written and submitted. When following up on it after not hearing anything, she was told they decided not to play it as she was told the loss was too fresh and it would make the students sad. She feels that her mourning has been interrupted by the lack of support and that they had refused to give peace to Jordan's loved ones and herself.

Patrick Smith of 300 Shining Rock Drive advised he submitted a legal complaint against DESE and a number of school districts in Massachusetts. He provided the committee with a packet of information and referred to page 46 that advises that neither DESE, the superintendent, nor the school committee have legal authority to mandate masks in schools. He proposed two questions to the committee, the first being, would the funding be withheld if they fail to enforce the mandates, and if they are obligated to enforce the commissioners illegal mask mandates in order to receive the ESSER funding.

Alan Finkel, a staff member at the Northbridge High School spoke during public comment and gave his presentation that was noted to be further along in the agenda. Notes from his presentation will be provided under the presentation section.

Chris Rivelli was introduced as the new Student Representative for the School Committee.

- VII. Superintendent's Report

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.

Superintendent Amy McKinstry advised that the QR code tags were given out both yesterday and today to assist with the NES parent pick-up and will start to be implemented on Thursday. The commissioner has announced that the mask requirement in schools is extended to November 1<sup>st</sup> and if the vaccination rate is 80% by that date, vaccinated individuals can go without masks. Amy shared slides regarding out students at NMS and NHS and their vaccination rates. The rates at NMS are 42% and at NHS they are 55%. These numbers include employees and students and is far off from the 80% vaccination rate. Overall, the town of Northbridge is at 55%. Amy also went over the most current Covid-19 town data chart advising that of the 27 positive cases in the 19 and below age group, 24 of those cases were NPS students and 3 were due to in school transmission. They did host a mobile vaccine clinic on Labor Day however the turnout was low. They are looking to host another one within the next few weeks. Nurse Lori Johnson has been in daily contact with the company being utilized for test and stay and they decided to go with a different company that will have the databases ready by next week. Amy also provided information on ESSER and the requirements, while addressing the 532 responses to the ESSER grant spending survey. She provided a chart revealing the percentages that the community thinks is important to spend the money on. Next, she informed that homecoming week was this week and NES was also participating in spirit week. She wished luck to all of the teams competing this week and advised that specific game times and schedules could be found on the NPS website.

## VIII. Presentations

### A. Pupil Personnel Services Update – Greg Rosenthal

Gregory Rosenthal. The Director of Pupil Personnel provided an update, starting with a slideshow of the Covid-19 compensatory camp which ran from August 9<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>. When Covid-19 closed everything down, the special education students missed out on a lot of instructional time so the school got creative with what they were going to offer. They spoke with SEPAC to see what could be done to mitigate losses and wanted more of a summer camp feel. They offered 3 extra weeks in August utilizing Covid-19 funding to provide a summer camp for the students to work on skills in a more relaxed and fun atmosphere. They had visits and experiences with the police department, the discover museum, a puppet show, Smiley from the WooSox, a traveling animal farm, the fire department, and even bowling. Gregory thanked all of the staff who participated and advised he would like to carry some of these activities into the extended school year including adding in more STEM opportunities. Gregory discussed the new co-teaching professional development and advised Jill Healy reached out to set up PD for champions of co-teaching. He advised that reading intervention will be a huge focus this year and there are going to be 15 special education teachers trained in it with the practicum. In addition to that, to make sure that this program is sustainable, Michael Morasse will become a trainer with Wilson. Lastly, he would like to start a group for ELL parent advisory to promote inclusivity for all of the community.

### B. HS SADD Chapter – Alan Finkel

Alan Finkel, a teacher in the social studies department for 17 years suggests that we begin a chapter of SADD in the high school. This stands for Students Against Destructive Decisions. It tries to find a way to build on mobility safety, substance abuse, personal health and safety, and mental health. Remote learning was gut wrenching at times, and depression and anxiety have been on the rise. He thinks that starting this chapter would serve to help students and would consult with guidance and the school psychologist before distributing anything with mental health. He has spoken with Chief Labrie and SRO Dejordy and the Northbridge Police Department is on board. He ran a table at club sign ups and over 30 kids showed interest. He will not need much from the district and SADD has readymade ideas. In the future they could fundraise and maybe do something at homecoming.

## IX. Consent Agenda

### A. School Committee Meeting Minutes from September 14, 2021

### B. Warrant 42-12s 9/16/2021 \$495,125.15

A motion was made by Erin Donahue to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Brian Paulhus.

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

Erin Donahue                      Yes

5 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.

## X. Action Items

### A. Superintendent's 2021-2022 Goals

A motion was made by Brian Paulhus to approve the Superintendent's 2021-2022 goals. The motion was seconded by Kathryn Atchue.

Steven Falconer	Yes
Brian Paulhus	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Kathryn Atchue	Yes
Erin Donahue	Yes
5	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

### B. EL Teacher to Para Reorganization

A motion was made by Erin Donahue to approve the reorganization of the EL teacher to a Para. The motion was seconded by Kathryn Atchue.

Steven Falconer	Yes
Brian Paulhus	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Kathryn Atchue	Yes
Erin Donahue	Yes
5	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

### C. K Special Education Teacher – Addition

A motion was made by Allan Richards to approve the addition of a kindergarten special education teacher. The motion was seconded by Brian Paulhus.

Steven Falconer	Yes
Brian Paulhus	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Kathryn Atchue	Yes
Erin Donahue	Yes
5	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. Discussion

A. NES library and driveway dedications (Dr. Balmer Media Center and Cpl. Dawson Drive)

There was discussion around dedicating the library with a mural and signage for the driveway and a street sign. Feedback from the community was that they would like to see the representation. This was turned into an action item.

A motion was made by Erin Donahue to approve the NES Library and driveway dedications. The motion was seconded by Kathryn Atchue.

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

5 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

B. Additional position – part-time Occupational Therapist

They are looking to add a 0.5 FTE Occupational for the 2021-2022 schol year to help support the current and anticipated OT caseload.

C. Additional Positions – Instructional Assistants

They are looking for the School Committee to approve the addition of 6 new Instructional Assistants to the budget to be funded through a combination of grant funding and available salary funds in the FY22 operating budget.

XII. Information

XIII. School Committee Individual Comments

XIV. Adjournment

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

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

5 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.

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