



# Northbridge Public Schools

## Northbridge School Committee

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Erin Donahue, Chairperson, [Edonahue@nps.org](mailto:Edonahue@nps.org), Jill Leonard, Vice-Chair, [jleonard@nps.org](mailto:jleonard@nps.org)  
Allan Richards, [aerichards@nps.org](mailto:aerichards@nps.org), Heather Alden, [halden@nps.org](mailto:halden@nps.org), Rebecca Johnson, [rjohnson@nps.org](mailto:rjohnson@nps.org)

### Northbridge Public Schools School Committee Meeting Minutes Tuesday, January 24th, 2023 7:00PM Northbridge High School Media Center

- I. Call to Order
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Attendance

Erin Donahue	Present
Allan Richards	Present
Jill Leonard	Present
Heather Alden	Present
Becky Jackson	Absent

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

After having been postponed for nearly three years, the Student Council hosted this year's Winter Ball on Friday, January 20th. The theme was black and gold, and students for all classes enjoyed a long awaited event that facilitated an exciting evening. Great job to all of the Student Council and E-Board members for this dance.

Our November Students of the Month were just announced and were celebrated for their commitment to the RAMS protocol. The freshman was Ellory Manning, the sophomore was Darian Sanders, the junior was Ru King and the senior was Zavian Reyes. Congratulations to all of these students for their determination and hard work.

On February 7th, Senior Graham Williams will be hosting a blood drive at Northbridge High with the Mass General Hospital Blood Donor Center for the second time this year. The Mass General Blood Mobile will be there from 8:00am to 1:30pm. Students will be required to sign a waiver if they are under the age of 16. We urge our students to participate in such a good cause and hope to see many people there.

Students in Mr. Nowak's Earth Space and Science class were asked to illustrate and explain a concept they had learned over the unit, except on a t-shirt. Once the shirts were completed, Mr. Nowak asked his students to participate in a fashion show to display their Earth science artwork and even had one group model their best catwalk while other students tried to guess the concept of their shirt. Great job to these students for such an interesting way of showing their knowledge.

Congratulations to DECA students Caroline O'Brien, Abby Schofield, Owen Pollock, Brendan Riche, Trevor Roadman, Jake Rogers, and Caleb Smith on their amazing achievements at the 2023 District Competition on January 12th. A special congratulations to senior Caroline O'Brien for taking first place in the Food Marketing Series Category and to freshman Brendan Riche who placed in the top 7 of the Sports and Entertainment Marketing category. Great job to all of these students and good luck to them in their next competition at Boston's Hynes Convention Center.

#### VIII. Superintendent's Report

On Friday, January 20<sup>th</sup> NES had an extra principal, Elaina Carroll, who was the PBIS raffle winner to be a principal for a day. She shadowed Mrs. Allen for the day, making morning announcements, participating in the principal's coffee and sitting in meetings. We're hoping that experience will turn her into an educator and she'll come back and work at the Northbridge Public Schools.

On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, NES will participate in Read Across America. If any committee member would like to read on that day please reach out to Mrs. Tritone. February 6<sup>th</sup> will be the 100<sup>th</sup> day of school, staff and students will dress as if they are 100 years old.

On February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6:30pm the parent liaisons from NES and NMS will be hosting a virtual meeting to talk about upcoming assemblies on cyber safety and bullying.

On February 8<sup>th</sup> the Junior National Honor Society will induct their new members.

On February 3<sup>rd</sup> some high school students will go to the middle school to speak to the 8<sup>th</sup> graders about the great opportunities they will have at the high school. On February 7<sup>th</sup> the 8<sup>th</sup> graders will have a shadow day at the high school. The district's numbers of students attending schools outside the district has gone down.

On January 24<sup>th</sup> Mr. Diorio held the first visioning session to discuss developing a new core value system at the middle school. The sessions are being held to help get the administration and teachers on the same page and have a voice in the process. The next session will discuss the middle schools vision for the future and how to revise the systems and structures to align with the new vision.

After school MCAS prep academies have started, the middle school has 27 sixth graders, 19 seventh graders and 18 eighth graders attending. At NES there are 24 fourth graders, 9 are math and 15 are ELA. Grade 5 has 25 students, 9 are math and 16 are ELA.

On Wednesday, April 12 at the high school field house a Celebration of Learning and Belonging will take place. There will be inclusive activities, student work projects on display and art and music of different cultures. Our community partners are invited to participate.

Starting on January 25<sup>th</sup> 8 students will start participating in the high school internship program to go to the elementary school for half a day a few days a week to help fill in for instructional assistants and teachers.

On Monday, January 23RD an All Call went out to the district letting them know I will be watching the news for impending bad weather. All afterschool events have been cancelled for tomorrow.

Erin Donahue said she is happy to see the Celebration of Learning coming back.

## IX. Presentations:

### A. Curriculum and Instruction Presentation - Jill Healy

This presentation is going to focus on the work that we have been doing over the past few years to strengthen the core curriculum. The focus is on all students across the district. We continue to incorporate evidence based instruction and practices and make sure the curriculum is aligned with the Massachusetts based framework. The stronger the core the less need for intervention.

At NMS and NHS this is the first year of the work. They are currently working to realign and strengthen curriculum units to create or refine assessments. Working to better understand how diagnostic assessments can be used to meet the needs of the students. At NMS it's the first year using Zearn across all grade levels. It's the first of a three year grant of OpenSciEd at the middle school, which is an open source curriculum.

At NES the work to align the curriculum began last year. There are benchmark assessments for reading comprehension, math and writing. There are strong curriculum resources for math, social studies and ELA. NES is using Mystery Science and teacher written units to help balance the science curriculum.

ECRI is having a big impact on strengthening the foundational skills for students reading. In first grade there was a 2% increase from the beginning to the middle of the year for nonsense word fluency. In second grade the focus is on oral reading fluency. There is a 3% increase from the beginning to the middle of the year. The impact of WIN shows there is a 19% increase in grade 3, an 11% increase in grade 4 and in grade 5 there was a 4% decrease overall but 43% of students are in enrichment that weren't there at the beginning of the year.

The building administration will be meeting with the teachers in each grade to help build stronger instructional strategies. Erin Donahue asked what is being done to better the percentages. Jill Healy said that Mrs. Allen is working with the teachers to give them added support.

Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) is an evidence based instructional strategy that is used with the core curriculum, with emphasis on writing. Students use simple acronyms to understand the meaning of text and they respond to the text in writing. The teachers have participated in 2 of 4 training sessions.

POW and TIDE are two strategies the students have been using to become comfortable in the writing process. POW helps students organize. They pick an idea, organize their thoughts and then write about it. TIDE helps them explain the idea, with an introduction, important details and an ending.

Kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Gantt, invited Mr. McLaughlin's fifth grade class to give an introduction on POW and TIDE. Mr. McLaughlin did hand motions and movements to help the kindergarteners understand POW and TIDE. The kindergarteners showed the fifth graders GIST.

Heather Alden believes the program is doing what it should be. She can see the difference between her two children. Her daughter used popcorn words and the level of reading her son can do compared to her daughter is very impressive. She thinks SRSD is fantastic and the program is working.

Jill Leonard said that there were gaps in the data because of COVID. We have to be aware that the development time when they should have been learning sounds at an early age was affected by not learning in person. Jill believes the trends will get better now that students are back to learning in person. Jill Healy said that the current second graders are the ones that were in kindergarten during COVID. The second and third graders were the most effected by not having in person learning. Erin Donahue said having Heather Alden talk about her two children and the difference she sees in how they learned reinforces what Jill talked about. Erin likes that Mrs. Allen already has a plan to touch base with the teachers and to come up with new strategies for the areas that are stagnant. Learning how to read opens up the ability to learn everything else. She hopes the schools stay with this program for many years. Erin asked if there has been teacher feedback on how they feel and do they like it. Jill Healy said a survey was sent out about how they feel about ECRI. Mrs. Allen received feedback that the teachers wanted to spend more time on SRSD so that is what they did at the January 13th Professional Development Day.

## X. Consent Agenda

### A. School Committee Meeting Minutes: January 10, 2023

A motion was made by Allan Richards to approve the School Committee Minutes from January 10, 2023. The motion was seconded by Heather Alden. The vote was taken by roll call and the following votes were recorded:

Erin Donahue	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Jill Leonard	Yes
Heather Alden	Yes
Becky Jackson	Absent

4 members having voted in the affirmative  
0 members having voted in the negative  
The motion was accepted with a roll call vote 4-0

B. Warrant 43-30s 01/19/2023 \$312,429.48

A motion was made by Heather Alden to approve Warrant 43-30s 01/19/2023 for \$312,429.48. The motion was seconded by Jill Leonard. The vote was taken by roll call and the following votes were recorded:

Erin Donahue	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Jill Leonard	Yes
Heather Alden	Yes
Becky Jackson	Absent

4 members having voted in the affirmative  
0 members having voted in the negative  
The motion was accepted with a roll call vote 4-0

C. Donation: Verizon

A motion was made by Allan Richards to accept the Verizon donation. The motion was seconded by Heather Alden. The vote was taken by roll call and the following votes were recorded:

Erin Donahue	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Jill Leonard	Yes
Heather Alden	Yes
Becky Jackson	Absent

4 members having voted in the affirmative  
0 members having voted in the negative  
The motion was accepted with a roll call vote 4-0

XI. Discussion

XII. Action

A. Policy DN - Disposal of Surplus School Property

A motion was made by Heather Alden to approve the Disposal of School Property policy. The motion was seconded by Jill Leonard. The vote was taken by roll call and the following votes were recorded:

Erin Donahue	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Jill Leonard	Yes

Heather Alden	Yes
Becky Jackson	Absent

4 members having voted in the affirmative  
0 members having voted in the negative  
The motion was accepted with a roll call vote 4-0

#### B. Policy DJE - Bidding Requirements

A motion was made by Heather Alden to approve the Bidding Requirements revision. The motion was seconded by Jill Leonard. The vote was taken by roll call and the following votes were recorded:

Erin Donahue	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Jill Leonard	Yes
Heather Alden	Yes
Becky Jackson	Absent

4 members having voted in the affirmative  
0 members having voted in the negative  
The motion was accepted with a roll call vote 4-0

#### C. Policy BEDH - Public Participation at School Committee Meetings

A motion was made by Allan Richards to approve the Public Participation at School Committee Meetings revision. The motion was seconded by Jill Leonard. The vote was taken by roll call and the following votes were recorded:

Erin Donahue	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Jill Leonard	Yes
Heather Alden	Yes
Becky Jackson	Absent

4 members having voted in the affirmative  
0 members having voted in the negative  
The motion was accepted with a roll call vote 4-0

#### D. Capital Plan

A motion was made by Heather Alden to approve the Capital Plan revision. The motion was seconded by Jill Leonard. The vote was taken by roll call and the following votes were recorded:

Erin Donahue	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Jill Leonard	Yes
Heather Alden	Yes
Becky Jackson	Absent

4 members having voted in the affirmative  
0 members having voted in the negative  
The motion was accepted with a roll call vote 4-0

XIII. Information

A. Staffing update

Mrs. McKinstry said the district is still in need Instructional Assistants and Behavioral Technicians. The high school has been in need of Behavioral Technicians all year. The middle school had two Behavioral Technicians but one just resigned. The only teacher position that needs to be filled is the middle school science teacher.

XIV. Adjournment - The Meeting of the Northbridge School Committee was called to adjourn by Jill Leonard and seconded by Heather Alden at 7:53 PM.

Erin Donahue	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Jill Leonard	Yes
Heather Alden	Yes
Becky Jackson	Absent

4 members having voted in the affirmative  
0 members having voted in the negative  
The motion was accepted with a roll call vote 4-0