



Northbridge Public Schools

Northbridge School Committee

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Northbridge Public Schools School Committee Meeting Agenda Tuesday, February 27, 2024 7:00PM Northbridge High School Media Center

- I. Call to Order (7:00PM)
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Attendance
 - Jill Leonard Present
 - Jonathan Canoy Present
 - Heather Alden Present
 - Shannon Canoy Present
 - Carl Cowen 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. Student Representative Report (7:05PM)

Boys High School Basketball team competing in the MIAA State Championships 2/27.

Girls basketball team is also playing tonight. Winter Carnival last week was a success. It was the first one held in a few years. Thanked Mrs. O'Brien and the Student Council for organizing the whole event. There were a lot of activities for students, such as jeopardy and games, there was a study hall for students who wanted it, Mr. Swayze taught a baking class to students. This Thursday, students will have an opportunity to go on a field trip to Boston Aquarium and Fanuel Hall, yearly field trip. HOSA has the National State Conference on

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Saturday. Several members of the DECA club qualified for states and are going to Boston this weekend to compete.

VII. Superintendent's Report (7:10PM)

During the recent February Vacation, the Grant Funded Math Academy had about 40 students from grades 3-10 attend out of 100 invited. The Academy went well and hopes there will be an impact on MCAS scores and grades overall. There will be a second Academy for Math over April Vacation, and Amy is hoping to see more participation as word gets out.

NES is having a Dr. Suess Spirit week for Read Across America. On Friday there will be a community read day, and she will be reading to the Third Grade. NHS Coffee Club will be hosting that day prior to the reading.

Congratulations to the NMS Student Council. They were nominated for, and won, the WCC Charles E. Thompson Youth Volunteer award for 2023 at the Whitins Community Center. Normally awarded to a single student under 18, but their work as a group as a whole volunteering at the community center earned it.

National Art Honors society collaborating on a Project with Big Ink from Mark Cody with Framingham State. Through grant funding, 11 groups made a Made designs to be made large scale woodcuts around the themes of courage and resilience. On March 6th, they will be going to Framingham State to tour the studios and have their woodcut printed.

February 28, Engineering firm of Plesson O'Neil will be presenting about the "Green Causeway" project from 6PM-8PM at the NMS cafeteria. Trying to make the community more walkable. They have worked with the district before on community projects and have a good reputation. A group of high school students have signed up to provide free childcare for parents who want to go, but cannot get a babysitter, so the community members can attend. They will get community service hours.

MCAS season is starting up soon. MCAS academies and extra studies have started. 8th graders will be taking the Civics test for the first time this year. MCAS schedules are being shared with families. Sophomores will be starting at the end of the month.

Draft results of TIERED Focus Monitoring results are in. Out of the 32 categories this time, only 4 needed a reply from the district. 3 of those categories are currently being done in the district and need to be re-presented to the TFM group, as they were overlooked the first

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time. The final one needs to be worked on in the district. Kate and Amy will provide a more thorough report to the School Committee once they finish making the response.

Over February Vacation, Dr. Scott Connery successfully defended his Doctoral Dissertation and was awarded his Doctorate.

2/28 6:30PM High School Administration having a Meet and Greet for 8th grade parents to show them what the High School has to offer and answer questions.

Mobile Dental Clinic is coming back. NES has March 15th and is currently waiting to hear back about getting extra days. NMS March 15th, NHS March 28th.

March 20th is a half day for students and the next Parent Teacher Conferences.

VIII. Presentations (7:15 PM)

A. Mr. Mac's Energy Bus

Moved to next meeting as Mr. Mac was unable to attend.

B. District Strategic Plan - Year Three (Mid-Year Update)

3 Goals for Plan: 1) Shared Leadership. 2) Inclusive Culture. 3) Teaching and Learning
Steps towards completing Goal 1)

1. Several Staff are providing PD in afterschool workshops to other teachers in March. Have 15 teachers providing the PD Workshops
2. School Councils are working with admin on SIP (School Improvement) initiatives.
3. MS and HS are working to align schedules, so the students have more opportunity to work together.
4. ST Math and SRSD Champions at NES working hard to promote those Initiatives, Open Sci-Ed received a lot of Training.
5. Celebration of Learning and Belonging – Planning Committee includes parents now, not just leadership team and parents.
6. Monthly Staff meetings. At the Middle School, “Share the Superpower”: Teachers share best practices with each other.
7. Student, Parent, and Staff Surveys around what we want/need for students. Most of these are qualitative (written in) and not quantitative (multiple choice).

Steps towards Goal 2). The district has been working hard to make a more inclusive culture.

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8. Parent/Guardian and DSR teams – parents/guardians, staff, students, community
9. Student/staff/parent feedback surveys. Portrait of a Graduate.
10. March Madness PD offered to both staff and some to parents as well.
11. Parent Forums 2/28 regarding grade level transitions, especially with transitions to 6th and 9th grade, questions about changing schools.
12. Celebration of learning and Belonging
13. Read Across America – Inclusive Culture
14. Principal Coffee meetings and Monthly Parent Meetings. Offering surveys as well.
15. “No Place for Hate” initiative. First activity happened at NHS and it was well received. NMS will be having their first event next week. Will be the same activity.
16. “Active Minds” club in the High School to address Student Mental Health needs and provide support and advocacy to the staff. It is completely student lead and run.
17. “Mr. Mac’s Energy Bus” initiative in NES
18. “Screenagers” 3 part documentary for the Middle and High School. Part 3 of the documentary is about Student Perceptions and Peer Pressure, drugs, vaping, alcohol. There are plans to show it to both students and parents, as after cellphones, vaping is the next problem to tackle.
19. All of the buildings have a weekly newsletter. Jill Healy sends out a Curriculum newsletter weekly to staff. Kate has been sending out the SPrEaD newsletter for the Special Education department to the parents. What’s on your Mind survey is still up, has been for 5 years.
20. Currently adopting a new website that will make integrating the NPS website and social media a lot more accessible.

Results from the Portrait of a Graduate have come in and been collated. Wanted to add this information here, as part of giving students a voice and being inclusive.

Took the top five responded to questions to present to the Committee.

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When asked what students would like to change about the school, the top five replies included: Make start time later, let students have more choice in their classes and electives, more RAMS blocks/less long blocks, Study Hall, Have classes to teach life skills.

When asked what students loved about the school, the top six replies included: Field Trips, School Events/Pep Rallies, The connections they have made with their Teachers, RAMs Blocks/being able to study afterschool, Sports/Clubs, Art and Broadcast Classes.

When asked what they want to learn that they feel they haven't had the chance to learn, the top answers included: Financial Literacy, Wood Shop, Home Economics/Cooking/Sewing, Social Skills/Interviewing Skills, Auto Mechanics, Mythology, Economics, Carpentry/Architecture, Criminal Justice, Foreign Languages other than Spanish/French, American Sign Language, Astronomy, Archeology, What comes next after High School or College.

When asked What do they want to do next, the top answers included: How to deal with live outside of school and how to live by themselves.

Steps towards Goal 3).

21. Aligned MTTS Framework to close the cracks.
22. Using student feedback from surveys.
23. RAM and WIN blocks
24. Revised the Curriculum and made it public.
25. Successful Cellphone plan Implementation.
26. 2nd year of SRSD Writing Initiative
27. 3rd year of Buddy Tutor
28. Math Acceleration Academies
29. Submitted for an Early Literacy Grant.

Quarter 2 Pass/Fail statistics came in, the Middle school had nearly a twenty five percent decrease from the first quarter compared to the previous year and only a slight decrease this year compared to last year in quarter two. The High School had massive decreases in failures each quarter from the previous year. Feels that this is very much due to the cell phone policy.

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Heather Alden stated that the Portrait of a Graduate gives her hope for the upcoming generation, as they want to learn these diverse and important life skills.

The students had replied that the most important quality to a successful individual is motivation and focus.

IX. Consent Agenda (7:40PM)

- A. School Committee Minutes 1-23-2024
- B. Warrant 24-30 1/25/2024 \$174,127.94
- C. Warrant 24-31 2/1/2024 \$210,533.35
- D. Warrant 24-32 2/8/2024 \$ 38,404.55
- E. Warrant 24-33 2/15/2024 \$159,945.89
- F. Warrant 24-34 2/22/2024 \$336,239.08
- G. Post Grad Field Trip

The students had chosen between the Boston Aquarium and Mystic Aquarium. They did a Pros/Cons list between the two. Will be doing a unit on marine life before they go.

H. DECA Field Trip

This year, they have 20 students and 7 qualified. 5 students fast tracked to Boston in the written, and 2 juniors are competing in the Role Plays this weekend. 3,600 will be attending this weekend at the Heinz Convention Center. All about independence and networking. There are scholarships available. If they win, they can advance to California. Because there are no seniors this year, the group decided to hold the recourses and fundraising for next year so they can compete in Orlando, FL, which is more viable than going to California. Works with the Post-Grad program a lot for business ideas. Both classes help teach each other.

I. Athletic Donation

Chairperson Shannon wanted to make it known that the Class of 1970 donated \$500 to the Athletic Department to pay for student fees.

A motion was made by Heather Alden to approve the entire Consent Agenda. It was seconded by Jonathan Canoy.

Jill Leonard	Yes
Heather Alden	Yes
Shannon Canoy	Yes

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Jonathan Canoy Yes

Carl Cowen Yes

The motion was passed with a vote of 5-0

X. Discussion (7:45PM)

A. Spring Town Meeting Requests

March 15th is when additions to the warrant that goes to the town meeting ends. Articles have to be approved before then. Normally, the articles are just the capital plan, but the School Committee can add anything if they want. Projects approved on Capital plan that would be placed on Town Warrant: ADA Stage Lift at NMS, Loading Dock Leveler at NMS, Bathroom renovations at NMS, Wireless access point updates at NMS and NHS. There would be no local tax implication. While it does not need to be approved tonight, if the next meeting is cancelled, a new meeting will need to be made quickly to vote on what to include. A member of the school committee must be at the Town Meeting to be able to read it off. Requests moved to action.

B. FY24 Budget Update

Same format as the update in November. Had about 105 staffing member changes this year. \$566,000 lower salary payments to date than anticipated, as people with higher salaries left and new people came in. The budget was built with those higher salaries in mind. \$429,000 salary not paid due to empty positions to date. Some positions were empty for some weeks or months, others have yet to be filled, and the anticipated salary has not been paid for that time.

Transportation increase for out of District transportation. The district was able to transfer line-item funds from within the transportation budget to cover the increased costs. While fuel and the share in Tech school costs are lower than expected, there has been an increase in the Out of District tuition costs.

Utilities are currently trending under the predicted costs, but it is not a significant amount, and there is still more of winter to get through.

Only spent about 1/3rd of substitute costs this year so far.

Increase in contracted services using an agency to provide 1:1 nursing. Offset by decrease in Virtual Highschool costs since there is a teacher at the High School who teaches Virtual

Highschool courses, so we get a discount. They were not here when budget was originally built.

Overall the district is about \$800,000 under budget (~2.5%).

Still have about 2.5 million left budgeted for the year that has not been spent yet.

Increase in Out of District costs. Had budgeted for 28 students (2.9 Million). There has been an increase in the number of students out of district, and changes in some of their placements. Has increased budget by \$152,000 dollars. Currently looking for Grant Funds to cover the costs, but may need budget funds. Currently, the district is using roll-over grant funds from last year and will allocate the grant funding from this year now.

District is applying for Extraordinary Relief under the Circuit Breakers. If we get the reimbursement, we will use that money instead of grant funds, and will roll over grant funds to next year's budget. Will know in April or May if we receive the extra grant funding. Any remaining grant funding will be rolled over into the next year.

Just looking to increase the line item spending by moving the budget around slightly.

XI. Public Comment (7:55 PM)

Daniel Fong-a-Fat: 221 Allana Drive. Former student. The Theater at the High School needs maintenance as they have been having electrical and flooding issues, and there is not a theater operator who knows how to run it. A lot of props have been damaged by leaks and flooding in the backstage and storage areas, and the maintenance requests keep getting ignored. Wants to know if money in the budget can be set aside to get someone to come in and look at the theater and possibly maintain it.

XII. Action

A. Preschool Tuition Rates 2024-2025

In response to the Committee's question about what other districts did about their increase schedule. Only a few districts got back to Melissa. All of the districts have different schedules of when they increase and how much they increase the cost. Historically, Northbridge has only increased as a lump sum when the question has come up, there has not been a percentage increase over a specified period.

School Committee agreed that the question of continuing with the historical trend or instituting an increase schedule can be a question for a later date, but will vote on the current proposed increase.

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B. Spring Town Meeting Requests

A motion was made by Heather Alden to approve the Pre-School Rate Increase and the items for the Town meeting. It was seconded by Jonathan Canoy.

Jill Leonard	Yes
Heather Alden	Yes
Shannon Canoy	Yes
Jonathan Canoy	Yes
Carl Cowen	Yes

The motion was passed with a vote of 5-0

XIII. Information

A. Second quarter failure update/comparison - MS/HS

Information provided during the District Strategic Plan.

XIV. Adjournment (8:15 PM)

A motion was made by Heather Alden to Adjourn. It was seconded by Jonathan Canoy.

Jill Leonard	Yes
Heather Alden	Yes
Shannon Canoy	Yes
Jonathan Canoy	Yes
Carl Cowen	Yes

The motion was passed with a vote of 5-0

Note: The listing 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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