



Superintendent's Newsletter

September, 2010
Issue 6

Susan M. Gorky, Superintendent
Nancy Spitulnik, Asst. Superintendent



Superintendent's News

Letter from Superintendent Gorky

Dear Parents and Community Members,

On August 31st we opened our doors to grades 1-12 students and the 2010-2011 school year was successfully underway. It's hard to believe the summer has flown by and that signs of autumn are in the air. I hope you had a summer filled with wonderful memories!

Our theme for this year will continue to be **High Expectations and Active Engagement for All Learners**. We are committed to and actively working on improving the achievement of all of our students through the formal implementation of Professional Learning Communities. Working in a Professional Learning Community (PLC) means, "Educators committed to working collaboratively in ongoing processes of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve. Professional learning communities operate under the assumption that the key to improved learning for students is continuous job-embedded learning for educators." *Learning by Doing (2010)*

Another important effort for us this year is in the area of Bullying Prevention. We are committed to addressing the requirements of the new bullying prevention law, M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, as added by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010. Last spring and through the summer we convened a Bullying Task Force to work on these issues. Northbridge Public Schools are committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyberbullying. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process. We will be developing and implementing bullying prevention and intervention plans and providing programs to promote positive school climates. The school district expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.

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Upcoming Events

*Bullying and Cyberbullying:
What Every Parent Should
Know.
September 30, 2010
Northbridge High School
Theater
7:00 p.m.

* Town Meeting
October 26, 2010
Middle School Auditorium
7:00 p.m.

We welcome our new middle school principal, Mary Ellen Mega. She brings a tremendous amount of knowledge and experience to our Middle School and Leadership Team. We also welcome our new Food Service Director, Robert Palmieri, and ARAMARK Educational Services, LLC to manage our Food Service Program. ARAMARK will bring enhanced menu offerings, nutritious wholesome foods, and nutrition and wellness expertise to our Food Service Program. Congratulations to all of our newly employed staff, and welcome to the Northbridge Family.

Clearly, the 2010-2011 school year promises to be a great one. Through creative and fiscally conservative staff reorganization, we are expanding our Middle School Related Arts to include Spanish. At the elementary level we have maintained our commitment to lower class size. Please be mindful that we are working with a level funded budget for the third consecutive year.

We believe that students learn best when the entire community works together and establishes strong and meaningful partnerships. We value your input and welcome your support and involvement. As we look forward to the new school year, we encourage you to become involved in school activities and in your child's education. I welcome you to join us as partners in preparing your children for their future.

If I can be assistance to you throughout the year, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Gorky
Superintendent of Schools

“Together...We Can”

Mission Statement

The mission of the Northbridge Public Schools is to prepare our students to become responsible, contributing members of society by providing a challenging, rigorous educational program which will maximize academic achievement, enable intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development in an atmosphere which promotes creative and critical thinking.

In Support of our mission, we are committed to the following beliefs:

- Excellence in instruction and student achievement must be accomplished through ongoing opportunities for professional growth and development of staff.
- All students should acquire, and use wisely, a basic core of knowledge in an environment that promotes higher level thinking skills across the curriculum.
- All students should be encouraged to attain high standards of achievement and to reach their maximum individual potential.
- Students should be able to communicate effectively through reading, writing, speaking, computing, the arts, and technology.
- Students should develop a sense of self-discipline, self-respect, self-reliance and demonstrate social and civic responsibility.
- Student learning is promoted through a safe and orderly environment, free of prejudice, violence, and harassment.
- All students should understand, respect and appreciate the racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity of our community and society.
- Community involvement should be actively solicited, encouraged, and developed.

District Goals - 2010-2011

- To increase academic achievement with high expectations and active engagement for all students and staff.
- To develop and secure a fiscally responsible budget that addresses the mission and beliefs of the district.
- To improve the social and emotional climate in the district.
- To strengthen the district's relationship with the Northbridge community.
- To support the consistent review and implementation of school committee policy.

The following are action items that will be clearly articulated in the Schools Improvement Plans, the District Professional Development Plan, the District Literacy Plan and the District Improvement Plan. The aforementioned action plans will include objectives/goals, responsible parties, budget implications and indicators of success.



Goal I: Academic Achievement

- To effectively differentiate instruction, challenge all students, and increase student achievement in all areas.
- To use a variety of indicators to document improved student achievement for all students.
- To seamlessly integrate technology across all classrooms in order to effectively prepare students for the 21st Century.
- To improve class size in the content areas and related arts.
- To enhance professional development opportunities for all staff.
- To improve the high school graduation rate.
- To develop a formative and summative assessment system for all students in addition to the MCAS.
- To vertically and horizontally align all curriculum areas to the Common Core Standards. The task force convened will prioritize mathematics and literacy.
- To implement Professional Learning Communities (PLC) at all grade levels and content areas. The PLC's will set and achieve common goals that result in improved learning outcomes for all students.



Goal II: Fiscally Responsible Budget

- To develop two District budgets based on potential variability in funding sources for 2011-2012.
- Continue to effectively communicate the needs of the district and be open and transparent to the public.



Goal III: Social-Emotional Climate

- Implement school/district student interventions based on staff and student input and work to develop responsive classrooms at all levels.

- Implement professional learning communities to empower staff and improve the educational climate.
- Implement bullying prevention program and training throughout the District.



Goal IV: Community Relationships

- Establish programs to promote citizen involvement in the schools.
- Continue involvement with the Town's Financial Planning Task Force and Charter Review Committee.
- Communicate and celebrate successes through a variety of media.
- Establish a Middle School PTA by fall of 2010.
- Effectively utilize Channel 13.



Goal V: School Committee Policy/Procedures

- School Committee will consistently meet with MASC and key stakeholders to update policies.
- Ensure alignment between School Committee Policy and student/staff handbooks.
- Update School Committee Member Orientation Packet.
- Ensure that School Committee procedures and protocols are published and understood, including yearly calendar of School Committee events.
- Review the Superintendent's Evaluation Tool.
- Ensure yearly review of District Goals and progress on the goals.
- Ensure a discussion with the full School Committee regarding having a monthly business meeting solely to discuss District finances.

*NPS
is
Going
Green*



Please send us your email!

The sole purpose for using your email is to communicate with you electronically and thereby reducing paper consumption. We will email newsletters, flyers, parent communications etc. Thank you in advance!

Please send your email address to the following appropriate schools:
Include: student name, parent name, and email address in the body, and "Going Green" in the subject line.

Northbridge Elementary: dmorreale@nps.org
W.E. Balmer: spoitras@nps.org
Northbridge Middle: bduclos@nps.org
Northbridge High: dvandenakker@nps.org

Grievance Procedure

Dear Northbridge Families and Staff:

We want to remind you our system has a policy of nondiscrimination that extends to students, staff, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business. No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of such public school on account of race, gender, religion, national origin, color, homelessness, sexual orientation, age or disability.

If someone has a complaint or feels that they have been discriminated against, their complaint should be registered by contacting the Northbridge Public School's Compliance/Grievance Officer, Dr. Nancy Spitulnik. You can contact Dr. Spitulnik at 508-234-8156 or nspitulnik@nps.org or in writing to Dr. Nancy Spitulnik, Northbridge Schools, 87 Linwood Avenue, Whitinsville, MA 01588.

Staff members who become aware of a harassment or discrimination situation must immediately notify Dr. Nancy Spitulnik, Compliance Officer.

Grievance Procedure

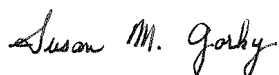
A person with a grievance concerning sex or handicap discrimination should submit the grievance in writing to the Northbridge School's Compliance/Grievance Officer and Title IX/Section 504 Coordinator. Within one week, the Compliance Officer will discuss the matter with the aggrieved person and render a decision. If the decision is in favor of the aggrieved person the Compliance Officer shall promptly take steps as may be necessary to put the decision into effect.

In the event that any decision of the Compliance Officer is not satisfactory to the aggrieved person, the person shall have the right to appeal to the Superintendent of Schools. Requests for such appeal shall be in writing to the Superintendent of Schools.

The Superintendent shall, within two weeks after being notified of such appeal, review the issues presented and render a written decision to the original decision. If the decision is in favor of the aggrieved person, the Superintendent shall promptly take steps as may be necessary to put the decision into effect. In the event that any decision of the Superintendent is not satisfactory to the aggrieved person, that person shall have the right to appeal to the Northbridge School Committee. Requests for such appeal shall be in writing to the Chairperson of the School Committee, Michael McGrath. The School Committee shall within four weeks decide the issue presented by the aggrieved person.

We appreciate your cooperation in this matter. Please contact us with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Gorky,
Superintendent of Schools



School Opening Times

The school opening times for the Northbridge Public Schools will be ten minutes before the start of the school day.

Opening times are as follows:

School	School Opening Time	School Day Start Time
Northbridge Elementary School	8:20 AM	8:30 AM
W.E. Balmer School	8:05 AM	8:15 AM
Northbridge Middle School	7:30 AM	7:40 AM
Northbridge High School	7:10 AM	7:20 AM (first bell)

Just as the practice was last school year, the school buildings will not be opening until ten minutes before the start of school to ensure the safety of our students and start the school day in a manner that is conducive to learning.

The buildings do not have staff available to watch over and ensure the safety of the children until ten minutes prior to the school day starting. It is suggested that students enter the school building, grab breakfast if preferred (K-8), and go directly to the classroom to start the morning.

If you have any questions please contact your child's principal. Student safety is our first priority. Thank you in advance for your support and understanding.





Responsive Classroom Grades Preschool - 8

In an effort to better meet the social, emotional, and academic needs of our students, the school district has trained 4 administrators and 46 teachers from grades pre-school to 8 in the Responsive Classroom approach to classroom organization, management and learning.

The Responsive Classroom approach emphasizes practical strategies that are infused throughout the school day and school year. These strategies incorporate interactive social skills and collaborative problem-solving, student engagement and guided discovery learning, modeling and teaching of expected behaviors, and a positive classroom and school environment that stresses student responsibility and self-discipline.

Information from the Responsive Classroom program states that the strategies are “designed to keep young people safe, connected, responsible, and engaged in learning. Healthy, enjoyable relationships are the foundation for success in school. In order to establish and maintain these relationships, teachers must know their students; students must come to know and appreciate each other; clear parameters for acceptable behavior must be drawn and consistently maintained; and learning must be engaging, exploratory, relevant, and varied.”

Our administrators and staff are thrilled with the results that were achieved in the classrooms last year. A teacher from Balmer and one from the Middle School have taken Responsive Classroom II this summer and are working to become Responsive Classroom trainers. The payoff for training teachers is: increased student motivation, responsibility, and self-control. Our teachers have learned detailed guidelines for building community, creating rules, teaching routines, introducing curriculum, and setting high academic and behavioral expectations.

SMART Boards Grades 4-12

We now have SMART Boards in all grades 4-12 math and science classrooms. SMART Boards are interactive whiteboards that provide teachers with more ways to engage students and encourage classroom participation. They engage students by displaying real-time images of any physical object or activity. They provide on the spot differentiation resources that teachers use to teach, review or accelerate student learning. SMART Boards are one tool that increases the level of technology integration and will help to provide our students with 21st Century Skills. We can think of Smart Boards as hands-on, minds-on technology tools to support students as they demonstrate what they know in multiple ways.

Technology



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School &
District News**

ONLINE PAYMENT ONLINE PAYMENTS!

The Northbridge Public Schools now accepts online payments! Parents and community members can make payments for preschool tuition, athletic fees, activity/club fees, after school program fees, facility use/rental fees, credit recovery course payments, and school food service through a quick, convenient, and secure online payment center established by UniBank. Please visit our website www.nps.org and click on the link on the left hand side "Online Payment Center". Complete each screen to process your online payment. Payment can be made by check or credit card.

The Northbridge Parent
Teacher Association

The Northbridge PTA in conjunction with Balmer Elementary School and Northbridge Elementary School works to support and fund children's programs within the elementary schools. We encourage parent and public involvement in the school district to help maintain a quality level of education. Through fundraising, we are able to pay for enrichment programs, agendas, help defer the cost of field trips and provide books to every child through the Gift of Reading program. The PTA relies on parent and teacher volunteers to be a successful organization. Our organization is only as good as our volunteers, so please consider lending a hand this year. If you are interested in learning more about the Northbridge PTA please visit our website at northbridgepta.org. If you would like to volunteer with the PTA please contact Jennifer Wolf (President) at jenwolf@charter.net (508-234-3070) or Paige Talbott (Vice President) at talbott4@charter.net (508-234-5901).

Thank you for your support!!!

For Community and School Information:

www.northbridgetimes.com

www.blackstonevalleytribune.com

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Leadership Team:

Mike Gauthier, Principal
Mary Ellen Mega, Principal
John Zywiec, Principal
Jill Healy, Principal
Melissa Walker, Business Manager
Cathy Stanton, Director of PPS
Gene LaCava, Information Systems
Manager

Future Superintendent Newsletters

If you would like a hard copy of the next Superintendent Newsletter please return this form to your child's school office and one will be sent home with your child.

Child's Name

Homeroom Teacher

It is the policy of the Northbridge Public Schools not to be discriminate on the basis of race, gender, religion, national origin, color, homelessness, sexual orientation, age or disability in its educations programs, services, activities, or employment practices.

Translation of documents are available upon request to the Pupil Personnel Services Office