



Northbridge Public Schools

Northbridge School Committee

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Erin Donahue, Chairperson, Edonahue@nps.org
Kathryn Atchue, Allan Richards, Jill Leonard, Heather Alden

Northbridge Public Schools School Committee Meeting Tuesday, October 11th, 2022 7:00PM Northbridge High School Media Center

I. Call to Order: The Meeting of the Northbridge School Committee was called to order by Erin Donahue at 7:00 PM.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Attendance

Erin Donahue	Present
Kathryn Atchue	Present
Allan Richards	Present
Jill Leonard	Absent
Heather Alden	Present

Also in attendance were Superintendent Amy McKinstry, Director of Business, Finance Melissa Walker, Director of Curriculum, Jill Healy and Middle School Principal, John Diorio.

IV. Statement of Audio and Video Recording

V. Statement of Mission

VI. Student Representative Report

Unfortunately Sarah Cowen was unable to attend the meeting due to illness. She emailed her report. On Friday, October 7, 2022 NHS held its first indoor Pep Rally without masks since the pandemic. Students from all grades gathered in the gym. The NHS Cheer Team performed to great applause. Games played were Around the World, Musical Chairs, Hunger Hippos, Tug of War and Pie Face with the eight class advisors. The Pep Rally was a fun time for both students and staff and contributed to the exciting Homecoming atmosphere that carried through to the Homecoming Dance that night. This Saturday, October 8, 2022 was the Homecoming day. It was an early start to the day for the clubs and classes setting up. It turned out to be a great day filled with lots of sales and great games. Student Council, SADD and DECA had different booths. The four classes also had different booths that sold a variety of items. Helped build funds to put on programs throughout the school year. It was great to see alumni come back and show their support. Homecoming was a huge success to all the volunteers, students and staff. Last week was Spirit Week, it was great to see so much Ram Spirit. On Friday, October 14, 2022

Northbridge will be hosting a blood drive from 8:00am-1:30pm. The Mass General bloodmobile will be in attendance. Any student who participates in the event will receive 1 hour off their community service requirement. On Friday, September 30, 2022 Freshmen Fun Fest was held. Clubs update: SADD seatbelt safety contest winner was Mr. Fickle. On October 8th the Varsity Football team hosted East Bridgewater for their Homecoming game, they won 14-13. It was Coach LaChapelle's 516 game of coaching the Rams.

VII. Superintendent's Report

Last week Superintendent McKinstry started the Ready Foundations learning series that was part of her third goal around cultural proficient leadership. She attended a full day conference with Mrs. Healy. They learned a lot and learned that we have a lot of work to do. It's a yearlong commitment. The next meeting is on October 27 and they need to share their why. They want to pursue learning around equity and diversity. The first learning block at middle school had 9 attendees. It focused on culturally proficient teaching strategies. Got great baseline data to focus our PLC's at the middle school.

Superintendent McKinstry met with the new public education coordinator for the Fire Department, Art Defena, he wrote a grant for the SAFE Program. He's going to work with the elementary students about fire safety. The PTA's Trunk or Treat is on Saturday, October 22 from 11-1pm. There is a school council meeting at NES from 3:00-4:00pm. Last week was Spirit Week at all schools. It was great to see everyone come together at the Homecoming game. Thanks to everyone who participated in the Homecoming events. Mrs. Gogolinski wrote a grant for \$15,000 for new furniture for the maker space, she is one of four finalists. Please go onto our Northbridge Facebook page to vote, because it comes down to whoever has the most votes. It's open until October 18, 2022. Additionally when you vote for the grant you can vote every five minutes. NHS will be hosting a flu clinic on October 12, 2022, from 5:00-7:00pm. It's free, but preregistration is required.

VIII. Introductions:

A. Jamie Marcoux, Athletic Director

Jamie is excited to be part of the town and the program. The coaches and athletes are great. There is a lot of passion in the town for the athletics. Homecoming was fun and she got to meet so many people. She lives in North Smithfield, RI and been in athletics her whole life. She has a master's in Athletic Training and has coached volleyball and then switched to the administrative sides of athletics. She was the Athletic Director at Johnson and Wales for six years and then went to Assumption and then to Springfield College as a professor.

B. Maeve Williams, SEL and School Climate Coordinator

Maeve is grateful to be in Northbridge, everyone has been welcoming. She's been doing SEL work for 10 years. She first worked with adults at rehab centers, then worked for the State Department in Malaysia for ELS learners. She taught second, third and fourth grade in LA. She was the SEL coordinate for a RI school and then the whole district. She attended graduate school for SEL the past year and a

half and worked at Harvard SEL lab. Attending a family partnership conference. She wants SEL in all the classrooms and throughout the whole district.

IX. Presentation:

A. MCAS 2022

Director of Curriculum, Jill Healy shared a MCAS presentation with the committee. She said the students now take the Next Generation MCAS which replaces the older Legacy MCAS which started in 2019 for grades 3-10. The differences are critical thinking skills, application of knowledge and the ability to make connections between reading and writing. It gives a clearer signal for readiness for the next grade level. It's designed to be given on a computer, have paper version for those who need it. As a result of the cancelation of the spring 2020 MCAS the D of E requested and received a waiver for certain accountability requirements. High School students will be required to earn a scaled score of 486 on English and Math and meet the threshold of 470 for Science and Technology. Prior was 472 for math, 486 for English and 220 for science and technology. The results from spring were mixed with math and science scores improving and English scores declining since 2020. The results show it's going to take us a few years to recover from the pandemic. Last year we still had pandemic policies in place and that had an impact to teaching and learning. The high school met or exceeded with state average in math and science. The full presentation can be found at the end of the minutes.

B. MS Grading Policy and Information

Middle School Principal John Diorio shared a presentation about the middle school grading policy with the committee. Mr. Diorio noted that some mistakes were made rolling it out but the roll out was done with the best of intentions. He wants to call it evidence of learning not an assessment based on labs, projects not just tests. Skills application process, 10% is made up of different types of assessments. Doesn't want to lock students into just taking a test. The retake policy for students that learn at a different speeds, don't want to punish the student. The students will need to go back and learn to show evidence that they did just that. Their new score will replace the old score. Grading practices to make sure students have a similar learning experience.

Why align expectations? We need our students to think for themselves and be ready for whatever is out in the world and think critically, apply knowledge, and make connections between reading and writing. We want to provide students with the ability to become part of the learning process. They can't be passive learners anymore. Looking at proficiency scales. Teachers need to have set clear learning objectives, develop observable criteria and the learning expectation should be concise and clearly communicated. We need to provide opportunities for success. Created a 3 year plan. Develop and use common assessments. Start a parent committee to help define grading practices. Going back to 0-100% in grading. Parent meeting is October 12, 2022 from 7:00-8:00pm.

The full presentation can be found at the end of the minutes.

Erin Donohue stated that she strongly supports aligned curriculum and learning. The plan roll out is not going well and watching it happen to the kids in the district is alarming. She feels the plan needs to be paused, if not the children will suffer. If the students have

all different options to choose from how are we aligning the plan? How come in Infinite Campus we are only seeing large assessments.

Mr. Diorio stated that we've learned that the grading and alignment of assessments are two different things. If we can't align expectations we won't make progress.

Erin Donohue wanted to know in terms of the retake policy what if the student doesn't follow through getting the papers signed to enable them to retake a test. Mr. Diorio said that the teacher has the ability to work with the student to give them the opportunity to retake a test without having a signed form from their parent. Superintendent McKinstry said the assessments need to accurately reflect what the students know but also have to reflect if they were taught that material deeply. We have to look at the data open and honestly and what it's saying to us.

Kathryn Atchue stated that the teachers within a grade have to be on the same page. The whole grade level team needs to know what is expected. Proficiency scales help identify the concept and the skills connected to a standard because that's what has to be taught. Have expectations been identified for each grade/subject? Ms. Healy said that the classes are taking one unit at a time. Beyond a year of work. Some areas are farther along than others. Teachers are building a bank of other assessments for students to use. Students don't have to retake the whole assessment, only the portion they did poorly on and worked on relearning it.

Superintendent McKinstry said the parent meeting the follow night should be about listening to parent's questions and then meeting as a leadership team to talk about clarity and then come back to the school committee with a presentation so we are all on the same page. Make sure at the parent meeting they know the new assessment isn't being used yet and the teachers are free to grade and test the way they have been.

X. Consent Agenda

A. School Committee Meeting Minutes from September 13, 2022

A motion was made by Kathryn Atchue to approve the School Committee Minutes from September 13, 2022. The motion was seconded by Heather Alden. The vote was taken by roll call and the following votes were recorded:

Erin Donahue	Yes
Kathryn Atchue	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Jill Leonard	Absent
Heather Alden	Yes

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 43-14s 09/29/2022 \$222,688.21

A motion was made by Heather Alden to approve Warrant 43-14s 09/29/2022 for \$222,688.21. The motion was seconded by Kathryn Atchue. The vote was taken by roll call and the following votes were recorded:

Erin Donahue	Yes
Kathryn Atchue	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Jill Leonard	Absent
Heather Alden	Yes

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

A. Creation of a Curriculum Subcommittee (two members)

Need two members to be on the Curriculum Subcommittee to be in the know about anything upcoming with the Superintendent. Jill Leonard and Heather Alden were nominated.

A motion was made by Erin Donahue to approve and nominate Jill Leonard for the Curriculum Subcommittee. The motion was seconded by Kathryn Atchue and Heather Alden. The vote was taken by roll call and the following votes were recorded:

Erin Donahue	Yes
Kathryn Atchue	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Jill Leonard	Absent
Heather Alden	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.

A second motion was made by Erin Donahue to approve and nominate Heather Alden for the Curriculum Subcommittee. The motion was seconded by Kathryn Atchue. The vote was taken by roll call and the following votes were recorded:

Erin Donahue	Yes
Kathryn Atchue	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Jill Leonard	Absent
Heather Alden	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.

XII. Action

A. Vote as Surplus: Middle School Cafeteria Tables

A motion was made by Erin Donahue to vote as Surplus: Middle School Cafeteria Tables. The motion was seconded by Kathryn Atchue. The vote was taken by roll call and the following votes were recorded:

Erin Donahue	Yes
Kathryn Atchue	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Jill Leonard	Absent
Heather Alden	Yes

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. School Committee Goals/Vision Statement

The School Committee Goals/Vision Statement is to support administration, teachers, staff and parents to develop the intellectual, physical, and social and emotional wellbeing of all students in our district by setting policy, approving an appropriate budget that addresses all areas of need in our district. Hiring, managing and evaluating the Superintendent.

A motion was made by Kathryn Atchue to approve School Committee Goals/Vision Statement. The motion was seconded by Heather Alden. The vote was taken by roll call and the following votes were recorded:

Erin Donahue	Yes
Kathryn Atchue	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Jill Leonard	Absent
Heather Alden	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.

XIII. Information

A. Staffing Update

Superintendent McKinstry noted the positions that were still open and shared that School Spring was being refreshed often. She said that interviews were being conducted non-stop and said that the staffing situation is a lot better than it was.

XIV. Public Comment

Brandon King of 75 Cheryl Drive. Was at the basketball game and was impressed by our students. The sensory children did very well. Indoor basketball was not ideal. Has a list of complaints, especially around the middle school. I am here on behalf of Erica Taft Davis, Susan Graceffa, Kara Massey Francis, Susan Searles, Beth Hall, Talia Berkowitz and Megan Elizabeth. The policy discriminates against children with learning disabilities, memory issues, anxiety, kids who cannot regurgitate information, kids on accommodations will never score above a 70%. Special needs MCAS were glossed over.

Mindy Poulin 1087 Second Street. Parent and math teacher in the high school. Concerned about the grading system in the middle school. Lower MCAS scores might be because the student doesn't know how to type in their answer, not that they don't know the information.

Beth 21 Mendon Road. Concerned about the middle school grading system. Has a PHD in Education and came to the meeting to hear about the grading system and to offer advice. There are MCAS grade level expectations, challenge to help teachers.

XV. School Committee Individual Comments

XVI. Adjournment: The Meeting of the Northbridge School Committee was called to adjourn by Erin Donahue at 9:08 PM.