



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 Minutes Tuesday, August 23, 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	Present
Heather Alden	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

VII. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Amy McKinstry gave the following report:

Summer Programs

Many of our students and staff members stayed very busy this summer with our summer programs.

ESY: 72 students were offered the ESY services, from 7/5-8/4

Activities that occurred: We had the traveling Children's museum come out for a science based activity using bubbles. Also, Tom did a session explaining the role of the SRO as well as how the police support the community. Additionally, he gave a demonstration of equipment and his police vehicle. The fire department also came out and provided a demonstration of equipment and vehicles.

(During the year we had new guidance from DESE that we had to provide

transportation to all students who had ESY services. This is new as only students with transportation identified in the IEP received the service. This was provided to us in May causing an adjustment to staffing and rooms. We provided structured activities for students who had drop in services within the NES library after their sessions were completed.)

ST Math and SEL Camp:

This summer, NES hosted an ST Math Camp. We had 60 students in grades 1-4 attend the 5- week camp. The mornings were spent exploring grade-specific critical math concepts, tackling complex problems and participating in a design challenge. Students engaged in rich math discussions, where they explained their thinking and analyzed different strategies. Teachers facilitated the connection between the ST Math puzzles and the math concepts to deepen student understanding. In the afternoons, students chose from a variety of camp activities including arts and crafts, games, drawing, and field trips to West End Creamery for mini-golf and Sparetime Recreation for bowling. The highlight of the camp was the learning showcase, where students shared the math games they created during the design challenge and received a variety of awards.

Math Acceleration Academy at MS:

This week, at NMS, 23 pre-algebra students are participating in a "Get Ready for Algebra" math acceleration academy. Students will review the foundational content for Algebra (including operations with rational numbers, solving equations, and linear functions). Each day, students will engage in stations where they will develop their conceptual understanding of the topics, apply their knowledge to solve real-world problems, and engage in fluency practice. In order to explore math in the real-world, students will complete a variety of projects. Some will make math games that can be played in math classes this year. Others will use their measurement and conversion skills to create a 5K route within the NMS building. They will discover the challenges of real-life budgeting by selecting a job and corresponding salary and then find a house, car, groceries, and other life expenses that fit within their monthly budget. We are confident that our students who participate will have a very successful year in Algebra 1.

We also ran traditional summer school courses for ELA and math at MS, and ELA, math and science at the HS.

COVID

This upcoming school year, districts and schools should focus their COVID mitigation strategies towards vulnerable and symptomatic individuals, while minimizing the need for more restrictive districtwide COVID policies.

The state of Massachusetts is not recommending universal mask requirements, surveillance testing of asymptomatic individuals, contact tracing, or test-to-stay testing in schools. There will be no mask mandate in our schools (other than school health offices) and there is no testing requirement for schools. However, any individual who wishes to continue to mask, including those who face higher risk from COVID19, will be supported in that choice. Also, students who show signs of COVID should remain home, as with any other illness, and will be sent home if they develop illness symptoms at school. We will offer families a free test

to take home if their child is sent home sick, and they wish to test for COVID. If a child does have COVID, they should still quarantine for five days from the positive test. We will be sending all updated COVID info out to families in the beginning of year form and packets.

This year the state of Mass will also continue to offer free breakfast and lunch to all students. However, we will still ask that eligible families complete the free and reduced forms for our meal reimbursements and for other benefits offered by the district. More information will be provided in the beginning of year packets on this as well.

NES

Open houses:

Kindergarten: Wednesday, August 31st, 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. and Thursday, September 1st from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Pre-School: Thursday, September 1st from 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Grades 1 & 2: Wednesday, September 7th from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Grades 3 – 5: Thursday, September 8th from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Beginning Bridges and NPS are sponsoring a free Countdown to Kindergarten event to welcome new kindergarteners to the Northbridge Public Schools. Students will be able to climb aboard a REAL school bus, enjoy a story walk, get a free book about kindergarten, do some music and movement, and get answers to last minute school questions. Pre-registration is encouraged, and the link is in the August NES parent newsletter and it is also on the NPS events calendar on the August 25th date. The event will run from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. at NES.

On Monday, August 29th, from 5:00 – 6:00 p.m., NES will be hosting a new student orientation for families of students new to the Northbridge Public Schools that will be attending any grade at NES. Then, at 6:00 p.m., following the orientation, the new Principal of Academics, Lorinda Allen, will be offering an in-person Meet n' Greet in the cafeteria at 6:00 p.m. for any families or community members who would like to stop by to meet her and say hello.

Registration is open for the AlphaBest before and after school program. The programs are available from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. For more information, you can contact NES, or check out the link in the newsletter.

Also, NES is looking for volunteers to help both in and out of the classrooms. If you're interested, please in assisting in any way, please reach out to NES.

NMS

On Saturday, August 27th, from 10:30 – 1:00, members of the NMS administration and a few staff will be taking a van trip through various neighborhoods throughout the town to build positive relationships and make connections with their NMS families and say hello before school starts. So, be

on the lookout for the email from Mr. Diorio with their route, so you can be outside to say hello when they're in your neck of the woods.

Mr. Diorio would also like to let everyone know that the Annual Family Fun Run will be taking place on October 2nd, so mark it in your calendar now!

NHS

The HS will be hosting their annual Freshman orientation on Thursday, August 25th starting at 7:30 a.m. followed by a cookout with the Freshmen and their families at 12:00 p.m. Freshman schedules will be handed out at orientation. Prior to the 12:00 cookout, the morning program is for students only.

Leadership Institute

Our administrative team, as well as our department chairs and team leaders, have been participating in leadership PD for the majority of the summer. APs, Deans and Principals each had their own academies, as well as a combined AP/Dean academy, and the DCs and Team Leaders had one day (with me), and then one day with the full leadership team and directors. Much of our training has been around ensuring alignment of systems across the district, as well as improving communication, collaboration and family and community engagement in the educational process.

Our curriculum director, SpEd director and myself are meeting all this week with each of the schools to go over protocols and procedures for next year, as well as finalize staffing, PD, and any other last minute issues, to ensure a smooth start to the school year for everyone.

We do still have openings at each of the schools, and our administrators are interviewing daily to fill the open positions. They are also working on back-up plans to fill the gaps until suitable individuals can be hired. So, if anyone calls Central office the first week or two of school, and you can't reach me or my directors, it's because we are subbing in the buildings.

That being said, if anyone is interested in joining our NPS team, we'd love to have you on board, so please check out our open positions that are posted on the NPS website.

Finally, I'd just like to thank all of the teachers, IAs and other staff who worked in our summer programs, manned our MH hotline, or helped administration with new staff interviews. Also, a huge thank you to our tech. department and their summer help who brought in and set up so much new technology this summer, and our custodial staff who did a fantastic job getting our middle school and high school looking almost as good as our new building. We are very lucky to have such dedicated people working in our school system. So, thank you all.

VIII. Consent Agenda

A. School Committee Meeting Minutes from June 23, 2022

A motion was made by Kathryn Atchue to approve the School Committee Minutes from June 23, 2022. The motion was seconded by Jill Leonard. The vote was taken by roll call

and the following votes were recorded:

Erin Donahue	Yes
Kathryn Atchue	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Jill Leonard	Yes
Heather Alden	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. Warrant 42-53s 6/30/2022 \$103,528.82
- C. Warrant 42-54s 6/30/2022 \$199,097.34
- D. Warrant 42-55s 6/30/2022 \$406,575.15
- E. Warrant 43-06s 08/04/2022 \$266,454.82
- F. Warrant 43-08s 08/04/2022 \$173,810.21

A motion was made by Kathryn Atchue to approve the above listed warrants. 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	Yes
Heather Alden	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

G. Unibank Donations

A motion was made by Kathryn Atchue to accept the Unibank donations. The motion was seconded by Jill Leonard. The vote was taken by roll call and the following votes were recorded:

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

IX. Discussion

A. NPS - 2022-2023 Handbook Changes

Superintendent McKinstry reviewed proposed handbook changes for the 2022-2023 school year. She pointed out to the committee that a new policy regarding the storage and usage of cell phones was added and that there were updates regarding the switch to Infinite Campus from iPass, updates to the BCAPS (Building Accommodation Plans), added SST (Student Support Team) procedures, and updated building appendices. Due to timing, with school starting next week, action on the handbook changes was requested to take place at tonight's meeting.

B. FY23 Chapter 70 - Increase in Funding

Melissa Walker explained that the school department was going to be receiving an increase in Chapter 70 funds above what was originally budgeted for FY23. She explained that the minimum required increase of \$30 per student in House 2, the Governor's proposed state budget, increased to \$60 per student in the state's final FY23 voted budget. This resulted in an additional \$60,720 for the Town of Northbridge. These funds will be proposed to be added to the school department's FY23 appropriation at the Annual Fall Town Meeting on October 25th. The Committee does not need to take action on a warrant article for this increase, rather the Town Manager has stated he will propose this increase in his budget article for the Town Meeting.

X. Action

A. NPS - 2022-2023 Handbook Changes

A motion was made by Jill Leonard to accept handbook changes as presented. 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	Yes
Heather Alden	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. NHS Senior Trip 2023

A motion was made by Kathryn Atchue to approve the NHS Class of 2023 Senior Trip to Six Flags Great Escape in Queensbury, New York. The motion was seconded by Jill Leonard. The vote was taken by roll call and the following votes were recorded:

Erin Donahue	Yes
Kathryn Atchue	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Jill Leonard	Yes
Heather Alden	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. NHS National Parks Trip

A motion was made by Kathryn Atchue to approve the NHS National Parks Trip. The motion was seconded by Jill Leonard. The vote was taken by roll call and the following votes were recorded:

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

A. FY21 End of Year Report Audit Report

Melissa Walker reviewed the FY2021 End of Year Report Audit Report with the Committee, both sharing the purpose of the report and reviewing the specific findings and resolutions captured in the auditor's report.

B. Staffing Update

Superintendent McKinstry reviewed the open positions that still remained unfilled as we approach the start of the 2022-2023 school year.

XII. School Committee Individual Comments

XIII. Executive Session Pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 30A Section 21(a) for the following purpose not to return to open session:

Purpose (3) to Discuss Strategy with Respect to Collective Bargaining with Union Personnel: Northbridge Teachers' Association

A motion was made by Kathryn Atchue to move into executive session for purpose (3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with union personnel, specifically the Northbridge Teacher's Association, not to return to open session. The motion was seconded by Jill Leonard. The vote was taken by roll call and the following votes were recorded:

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

XIV. Adjournment