

NORTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Norton, Massachusetts

MEETING NOTES

TO: ALL STAFF MEMBERS
FROM: Patricia H. Ansay, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools
DATE: June 20, 2006

Date of School Committee Meeting: Monday, June 19, 2006

Location: Library, Norton Middle School

Attending:

Committee Members: Mrs. Donna Gradie, Chairperson, Mr. Jonathan O'Reilly,
Mr. Thomas Golota and Mrs. Margaret Werner

Guests: Mr. John Young, Energy Education Manager
Ms. Terri Pillsbury, Athletic Director
Mrs. Irene Stanovitch, Cafeteria Director
Mr. Steven Moore, On-Point Graphics
Mr. Raymond Dewar, Principal of Norton High School
Mr. Roger Parent, Principal of Norton Middle School
Mr. Michael O'Rourke, Assistant Principal of Norton Middle School

Call to Order:

Chairperson Gradie called the meeting to order at 6:50 p.m.

Energy Education Update:

The first order of business was an update on the Energy Education program by Mr. John Young, Energy Education Manager, and Mr. Charles Faschnaut of Energy Education, Inc. Mr. Young reported that the support from the school department staff has been excellent. According to Mr. Young, there are teachers who are using "half lighting" whenever possible. Mr. Young mentioned that the consultants from Energy Education, Inc. visit regularly and are of great assistance. He mentioned that we do have some areas in the schools needing work, and there are also concerns with the waste water treatment system. Mr. O'Reilly asked about the total calculated savings. Mr. Faschnaut explained that this is a "gross" savings figure. He said the school department is on track, and is well above the curve in terms of expected savings. Mr. Faschnaut explained that most of the savings are from electrical costs, and they are very significant.

Review and Approval of Minutes of Prior Meeting:

A motion was made by Mrs. Werner, seconded by Mr. Golota, to approve the Regular Session Minutes of the meeting held on June 5, 2006, and the Executive Session Minutes of the meeting held on May 15, 2006. On a 4-0 vote, the committee unanimously voted to

approve the June 5th Regular Session Minutes. On a 3-0 vote, the committee also voted to approve the Executive Session Minutes. Mr. O'Reilly abstained from this vote due to his absence at the May 15th meeting.

Bids: Athletic Equipment/Physical Education/Cafeteria:

Ms. Terri Pillsbury, Athletic Director, provided the committee a summary of the closed bid for replaced athletic equipment and supplies, and the winning vendors selected. She asked if the committee had any questions. Mrs. Gradie asked if we have used any of these winning vendors in the past. Ms. Pillsbury replied that all vendors have been used in the past, with the exception of "Stadium", however she is familiar with "Stadium" and she said they are a reputable business.

On a motion by Mr. O'Reilly, seconded by Mrs. Werner, the committee unanimously voted to accept the winning vendors selected for the replaced athletic equipment and supplies bid.

Mrs. Irene Stanovitch, Cafeteria Director, provided the committee a summary of the closed Cafeteria bids, and the winning vendors selected. Mrs. Stanovitch explained that all winning vendors are in line with the Wellness Policy of the Norton Public Schools.

On a motion by Mr. O'Reilly, seconded by Mr. Golota, the committee unanimously voted to accept the winning vendors selected for Cafeteria bids.

Ms. Joan Cardoza, Physical Education Supervisor, was unable to be present to provide the committee with a summary of the closed Physical Education bid. Therefore, the Superintendent made this presentation, and explained that Ms. Cardoza is recommending Passon's Sports as the winning vendor. She further explained that the Health items are purchased from the companies who sell the needed items. No one responded to the Health bid.

On a motion by Mrs. Werner, seconded by Mr. Golota, the committee unanimously voted to accept the winning vendor selected for the Physical Education bids.

Fundraising Presentation:

Mr. Steven Moore gave a brief overview of his "Doors of Norton" Calendar fundraiser. Mr. Moore explained that the calendar will feature the winning photos of a photo contest. The calendar will include a brief history of the town seal, the lancer, emergency numbers and town hall numbers. The calendar will be paid for by advertisements for local businesses. He said once the calendar is printed, there will be approximately \$8,000 - \$12,000 left over. He would like to make this money available to be used for the students of Norton. Dr. Ansay suggested that the funds raised from the calendar could simply be deposited into the "Unrestricted Gift Fund". Mr. Moore explained that this is a private endeavor that does not use town money. He explained that he has established a board of trustees, and any withdrawals of the funds will require the signature of all three trustees:

his accountant, his treasurer, and himself. Mrs. Gradie suggested that an educator could also participate on this board as one of the signers. Dr. Ansay said she and the committee are trying to make the donation process less cumbersome for Mr. Moore. Mr. Moore thanked the committee for their suggestions and emphasized that this fundraising project will not cost the town anything. Mrs. Werner clarified that Mr. Moore is not looking for the committee's approval for the project. His presentation is meant to inform the committee that he is moving forward with this idea and anticipates having funds to donate eventually.

Mr. O'Reilly commented that he thought the fundraiser is a great opportunity for Norton. Mrs. Gradie asked how the project will be coordinated. Mrs. Werner suggested that Mr. Moore should write an article in the local newspaper. Mr. Moore announced that he can be reached by e-mail at onpoint-graphics@comcast.net.

School Improvement Plan Accomplishments:

Mr. Raymond Dewar, Principal of Norton High School, presented an update on the School Improvement Plan for the high school. He said the N.E.A.S.C. visit was a "double edge sword". There is a minus side and a plus side, he said. Mr. Dewar explained that the word "on going" is the most common phrase in the plan. Eventually it would be nice if we could create a Freshman Humanities sequence, he said. He said he is very excited about the Oceanography course and the Construction Technology course. Mr. Dewar said they are working very hard at bringing MCAS scores up. He said there was only one student that did not graduate this year due to not passing the MCAS, and he's hoping that this student will receive a diploma by August. He said the high school is expanding course offerings all of the time, and all new teachers take the RBT course.

Mr. Dewar next explained the school climate. He said kids do know the consequences of their behavior, and there have been no suspensions for smoking this year and less fighting. He said the buildings and grounds look great right now and the field of dreams has come together. Mr. Dewar said the baseball and softball field look great. He explained that we have also started a new relationship with the Norton Police Department. We will have a "Resource Officer" next year named Officer Jacob Dennett. Mr. Dewar explained that the high school is very excited for that to get going.

According to Mr. Dewar, the late bus has a regular ridership, and the cable TV station has been great. He is hoping to grow that relationship so that we see more student run programming next year. Mr. Dewar also commended the Parent Advisory Board this year. He said the banking presentation about credit cards was wonderful, along with the essay contest about predators. Mr. Dewar remarked that the community has really stepped up with donations for scholarships, and the relationship with the YMCA has blossomed.

Mr. Dewar explained that Freshman Orientation this year will be put on by the current freshman class. He said he is trying to support student ideas so they will feel vested in the school. He said the kids are really putting great ideas out there, and he is

encouraging them to run with their ideas. Lastly, Mr. Dewar mentioned "Service Learning". He said there are a lot of possibilities for us to meet the needs of at risk kids. Mrs. Gradie commended Mr. Dewar, pointing out that everything he is doing is very aggressive. She said she noticed that he always mentions "we can do better". That is a testimony to you and your high expectations, she said.

Lastly, Mr. Dewar explained the proposed handbook changes to the Norton High School handbook. A new Honor Code statement will now be implemented at the high school. Students must abide by this Honor Code, which promises they have neither given, nor received unauthorized aid on their work. Mr. Dewar explained that this handbook change will point out what is cheating and what is plagiarism. Group work previously approved by a teacher will not be considered plagiarism. Due to the "Education Reform Act", there was no need for the School Committee to formally accept the handbook changes announced by Mr. Dewar.

Middle School Schedules:

Mr. Roger Parent was present to discuss the updated schedule information for Norton Middle School. Mr. Parent explained that after meeting with the Site Council, there are basically 4 or 5 different schedules which could be implemented. Mr. O'Reilly asked Dr. Ansary her opinion on the middle school schedule. Dr. Ansary recommended the middle school schedule which ends at 3:05 pm. Mrs. Gradie asked Mr. O'Rourke if he agreed with starting homeroom at 8:40 pm. Mr. O'Rourke concurred that this schedule works.

On a motion by Mrs. Werner, seconded by Mr. O'Reilly, the committee unanimously voted to approve the schedule for Norton Middle School which has a start time of 8:40 pm, and an end time of 3:05 pm.

Summer Music Lessons:

Next, several parents were present to discuss the status of private music lessons previously provided at the schools. Dr. Ansary explained lessons would continue as they have in the past for now. However, she pointed out that the school department does have a policy regarding usage of the facilities, and some aspects of what has been going on with summer music lessons in the past have violated policies. Mr. O'Reilly explained that when Mr. Sheehan gave summer music lessons, he gave the money back to the school. He said the committee understands that without summer music lessons, there will be no band. However, he pointed out that there are liability issues. He suggested that the music instructors could be paid a stipend to teach lessons over the summer.

Mrs. Gradie mentioned that she was not aware summer music lessons were taught in the Norton Public Schools. The Superintendent mentioned that we do not have a Custodian who can remain at the door to allow students in and out of the building. Mr. Golota asked if there are any liability issues. Mrs. Gradie explained that these are private lessons being held on public school property. She said we have teachers coming in who are not associated with the Norton Public Schools; therefore we have to look at the entire picture.

Mr. O'Reilly made a motion to continue with Summer Music Lessons, but with the understanding that a committee will be formed to develop a new structure for the music lesson program in the future. Mrs. Werner seconded the motion. On a 4-0 vote, the committee unanimously approved the motion.

Capital Improvement:

After expenditures were taken care of, the ending balance in the capital improvement account is \$263,000.94 according to the Superintendent. Dr. Ansay provided the committee with the plans for summer work to utilize most of the remainder of the original \$2.1 million for school renovations.

FY '07 Budget:

The Superintendent discussed the FY '07 Budget with the committee. She said the failure of our override comes at a time of celebration. However, with the failure of the override, comes the need to reduce the FY 07 budget. She said 25 professional positions have been eliminated and pointed out that the obvious question will be, "Who do we blame"? Dr. Ansay explained that at this moment, playing the blame game won't help. She said, "I for one am looking for solutions, because it is the lives of our kids that are being affected. Adequate funding is still the key. At this time I would like to personally thank those individuals who worked so hard to try to make the override successful."

Dr. Ansay read the names of those staff members who received termination notices last Wednesday. Failure of the override has caused the accreditation of the high school to be at risk, she said. Hockey, Swimming and Wrestling will not be supported by the budget either. There is also a freeze on textbooks, etc.

Parents asked what can we expect for the art, music, and gym classes in the elementary classes. Dr. Ansay explained that Computer classes will be shorter. The number of classes that students have on a weekly basis will also be reduced.

Parents also spoke out about their concerns with the decrease in Special Ed for the summer. In the past, the summer program was a 5 day per week program, and it has been drastically reduced to 3 days a week. The parents pointed out that "Autism" does not take a day off. The parents commented that it is disappointing to think services are being denied to the children that need them the most. The parents feel we need to come together as a community, because the expertise is here, the teaching staff is here, we need to find a way to let our teachers teach our kids.

Many parents spoke out about their anguish with the defeat of the override. Many commented that it should not be the responsibility of the "school parents" to pay for the schools. It is the responsibility of the community they said. The community must give back to the children, they said, because that is the foundation of public education. Mrs. Gradie emphasized that we know what happened with the override and we must move forward.

She said that everyone wants us to get creative. Her philosophy is that it is a “circle of life”. We know what we all believe in, and we know what we all want to accomplish, she said. According to Mrs. Gradie, we need to come together as a town and as a community to come up with different ideas for funding.

Personnel:

Resignation:

- a. Mrs. Pamela O'Donnell, NHS Biology Teacher, effective June, 2006.
- b. Mrs. Amy Burns, NMS Adjustment Counselor, effective June, 2006.

Appointments:

- a. Miss Rebecca Miguel, Applied Behavior Analysis Therapist, effective July 5, 2006.
- b. Mrs. Suzanne Butler, MS Cafeteria Assistant, effective September, 2006.

Adjournment:

On a motion by Mrs. Werner, seconded by Mr. Golota, on a 4-0 vote, the committee unanimously voted to adjourn at 9:50 p.m.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

Monday, September 11, 2006, 6:30 P.M., Norton Middle School Library

Enjoy the season!



These Meeting Notes are intended to keep the school district and the community informed in a timely fashion following a meeting of the Norton School Committee. They have not been officially approved by the committee.

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