

NORTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Norton, Massachusetts

MEETING NOTES

TO: ALL STAFF MEMBERS
FROM: Patricia H. Ansay, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools
DATE: November 13, 2007

Date of School Committee Meeting: Monday, October 22, 2007

Location: Cafeteria, Henry A. Yelle Elementary School

Attending: Committee Members: Chairman Kevin O'Neil, Vice-Chairman Thomas Golota, Mrs. Beth McManus, Mr. Andrew Mackie, Mrs. Margaret Werner and Student Representative Emily Carmichael.

Call to Order:

Chairman O'Neil called the meeting to order at 6:36 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance

Review and Approval of Minutes of Prior Meetings:

On a motion by Mr. Mackie, seconded by Mrs. McManus, the committee unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the prior meetings held on October 1, 2007 and October 15, 2007.

H. A. Yelle School Opening of School Report:

Mrs. Lisa Farrell, Principal of the H. A. Yelle School, was present to give her opening of school report to the committee. She introduced new staff members, and reviewed a variety of activities that have occurred since the beginning of school, such as the "Citizen Yelle" program, the "Word of the Day" program, the "Homework Heroes" program, and the "Anti-Bullying" program. She also reviewed activities planned for this school year. Mrs. Farrell commended the Yelle School Parent Board for being extremely supportive. She also described one of the "positives" that came about when classrooms were temporarily displaced due to construction and repairs at the school. According to Mrs. Farrell, old friendships were rekindled among the Yelle School staff, when classrooms were temporarily moved around. She said faculty members got to know each other again, and that is something good which resulted from the need to move classrooms temporarily.

Mrs. Farrell also commented that the grounds at the Yelle School look very nice, and are being nicely kept up. She explained that the Yelle School is just like an old home. She said it will be necessary to maintain the work that has now been completed on the building. She also stressed that schools do not just educate children. According to Mrs. Farrell, when schools educate a child, they also educate a family. Mrs. Werner commended Mrs. Farrell for holding the Yelle staff together during the construction and repair process. Mrs. McManus also commended Mrs. Farrell, and thanked her for her nice presentation.

Library Volunteer Program:

Dr. Ansay addressed the issue of reopening the elementary and middle school libraries. According to Dr. Ansay, reopening these libraries with paid library technicians would involve a significant cost to the district. She explained that the district would be unable to support these salaries. Therefore, Dr. Ansay described a process to secure voluntary library assistants. She explained that this process has already begun, and the details for training are being worked out. She is hopeful that the elementary and middle school libraries will soon reopen with voluntary library assistants.

District MCAS Analysis:

Co-Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Mrs. Amy Berdos, was present to give an in-depth analysis of the district's MCAS test results. Mrs. Berdos gave a PowerPoint presentation. She emphasized that over all we have seen nice improvements in many areas and will continue in this positive direction. According to Mrs. Berdos, we do have work to do in English Language Arts and Math in Grade 3. However, nice gains have been made in Grade 4, particularly in reducing our Needs Improvement Areas in English Language Arts. In Grade 5, we have increased Advanced/Proficiency by 12% in English Language Arts, 16% in Math and 10% in Science. In Grade 6, we need to continue focusing on Math although we increased our Advanced/Proficiency by 9%. In Grade 7, we continue to exceed the State average in both English Language Arts and Math, above the State by 5% in Math and 10% in English Language Arts respectively. And in Grade 8, although we have increased Advanced/Proficiency in English Language Arts and Math, Science remains stable. In Grade 10, although stable in the last two years, we need to focus on increasing the percent of students in both Advanced and Proficient.

Mr. Mackie expressed his concern over the district MCAS results. He said the results have increased significantly over last year. However, according to Mr. Mackie, we need to have leaps and bounds of improvement. Mrs. Berdos suggested that the committee should look at the national scores which reveal that Massachusetts is number one in the entire country. Mr. Mackie said he believes we need to do things very differently, despite all of the gains we've made. According to Mr. Mackie, there is a vast difference between where we are at today with our MCAS scores, and where the State challenges us to be in

2014. Mrs. Werner questioned who set the standard for 2014. She said children are not cookies on an assembly line. She suggested that the standard for 2014 could be unrealistic. Mr. Golota said he believes the school district is doing quite well. Dr. Ansay said she is cautiously optimistic about the district MCAS scores. She said interventions are needed for the students, but interventions cost money. She commented that the community and the State must plan to adequately fund education if these students are going to get what they need. She said we are focused on continuous improvement despite the challenges. Mrs. McManus said the staff should be commended for all they do. Mr. O'Neil thanked Mrs. Berdos for a great presentation.

Surveillance Camera Policy:

Dr. Ansay explained that the district is in need of a policy outlining the following areas associated with current surveillance camera use: location, control, operation, public awareness, and purpose (health, welfare, safety of all). She said the suggested policy has been reviewed and supported by the middle and high school administration, site councils, School Resource Officer Jacob Dennett, and Mr. Robert Keating, a parent. On a motion by Mr. Golota, seconded by Mrs. Werner, the committee unanimously approved the Surveillance Camera Policy as written.

PERSONNEL:

Leaves of Absence:

Mrs. Lori Andrade, LGN Grade 1 Teacher, effective March 17, 2008
Mrs. Lisa Gardner, JCS Grade 1 Teacher, effective April, 2008

Resignations:

Mrs. Roberta Sanphy, LGN Educational Assistant, effective October 26, 2007
Mr. James Shanley, Girls Varsity Soccer Coach, effective immediately

Appointments:

Mrs. Kristen Howard, JCS Nurse, effective October 15, 2007
Mr. Kevin Cullen, NHS Technology Technician
Mrs. Linda Rivard, LGN Cook, effective October 1, 2007
Mrs. Margo Arcaro, NHS Cafeteria Assistant
Mrs. Bonnie Belanger, NHS Part-Time Cafeteria Assistant
Mrs. Maribeth Boulos, NHS Part-Time Cafeteria Assistant
Mrs. Lori Nagle, JCS Cafeteria Assistant
Mrs. Margaret Pyron, JCS Part-Time Cafeteria Assistant

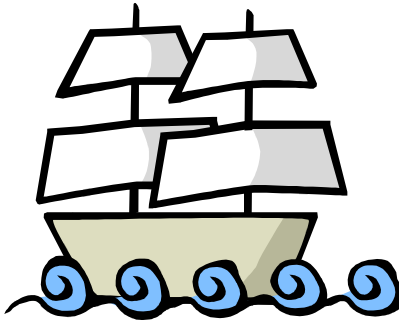
Adjournment to Executive Session:

On a roll call vote, the committee unanimously voted to adjourn to Executive Session at 8:30 pm.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

Monday, November 19, 2007, 6:30 P.M., Norton Middle School.

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 may not be officially approved by the committee.

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