

NORTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Norton, Massachusetts

**MEETING NOTES**

TO: ALL STAFF MEMBERS  
FROM: Patricia H. Ansay, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools  
DATE: February 14, 2007

**Date of School Committee Meeting:** February 12, 2007

**Location:**  
Library, Norton Middle School

**Attending:**

**Committee Members:** Chairperson Mrs. Donna Gradie, Vice Chairman Mr. Kevin O'Neil, Mr. Thomas Golota, Mrs. Margaret Werner and Student Representative Larissa Weiner. Mr. Jonathan O'Reilly was absent.

**Call to Order:**

Chairperson Gradie called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

**Review and Approval of Minutes of Prior Meeting:**

A motion was made by Mr. Golota, seconded by Mrs. Werner, to approve both the Regular and Executive Session Minutes of the prior meeting held on January 29, 2007. On a 4-0 vote, the committee unanimously voted to approve the Minutes.

**Vote to Approve Grade 6 & 7 Math Textbooks:**

Mr. Michael Ward, Academic Coordinator for Mathematics, presented the new math textbooks to the committee. Mr. Ward explained that this will complete the purchase of math texts for Grade 6-8. He discussed the selection process, and explained that the textbooks were reviewed by the teachers. According to Mr. Ward, Mrs. Berdos was very helpful. He also noted that the textbook chosen is available on-line, so that students can go home with or without their textbook. Dr. Ansay commended Mr. Ward and stated that his work as an Academic Coordinator is appreciated at both the middle school and the high school. Mrs. Gradie thanked Mr. Ward for all of his work

On a motion by Mr. O'Neil, seconded by Mr. Golota, the committee unanimously voted to approve the new Grade 6 & 7 math textbooks.

**Vote to Approve Elementary World Language Program:**

Dr. Ansay explained that for September, she is proposing that every Grade 1-5 classroom will have one session of world language, French and/or Spanish. This time will be taken from one of the three available wellness classes (two physical education and one health). The result will be two wellness classes and one world language class. Dr. Ansay informed the School Committee that both the world language and wellness curriculum are currently under revision. Physical education activities will be strenuous and active. Health topics will be less redundant. She explained that there would be no additional cost to the district, as one physical education teacher will retire, and will be replaced by one world language teacher. This class will also address the cultures of France and Spain, as outlined in the state social studies frameworks. The school department would need to advertise for this teacher during the month of April. Dr. Ansay explained that during the following year, this instruction would be extended through Grade 6 in some format.

Dr. Ansay discussed the research which supports teaching foreign language to children at a younger age. According to this research, children learn a foreign language easier when they are taught it at an earlier age. Mrs. Patricia Penza, Academic Coordinator for World Language, was present to offer her support for instituting foreign language instruction at the elementary level. A discussion ensued about the difference between the Spanish language and the French language. Mrs. Penza commented that we do have a growing number of Spanish speaking people in the United States, however, she said the French language is spoken more globally, especially in many of the African nations. Mr. Golota said he believes the French language is beautiful, however, it seems Spanish is the language that is most often connected with employment requirements in this country.

Mrs. Gradie mentioned that many parents opt to send their children to the Foxboro Charter School because of the full-day Kindergarten, and the instruction of Spanish in the early grades. She believes parents will be pleased with the new Elementary World Language Program proposed by Dr. Ansay. Mrs. Werner concurred, stating that in most European countries, people speak several languages. Mr. O'Neil emphasized that we should make sure that physical activity remains the focus of our Physical Education classes. He suggested that the Elementary World Language program be approved with the condition that it be evaluated after one year.

On a motion by Mr. O'Neil, seconded by Mr. Golota, the committee unanimously voted to approve the Elementary World Language Program, with the stipulation that the program will be evaluated after one year.

**Bid Award, NHS Entrance Door Replacement:**

Dr. Ansay explained that five bids were received and New England Construction Specialties of Franklin, MA, was the lowest, responsible bidder, with a price of \$74,023. Dr. Ansay further explained that reference checks were made. On a motion by Mr. O'Neil,

seconded by Mrs. Werner, the committee unanimously voted to award the NHS Entrance Door Replacement Bid to New England Construction Specialties.

**Bid Award, Design Services Contract for NMS Repairs:**

Dr. Ansay explained that the Design Selection Committee provided a recommendation to award the bid. The finalists were LPBA Architects and Russo-Barr Associates. A discussion ensued about why design services are required. According to Dr. Ansay, if a repair is going to exceed \$100,000, legally, design services must be used. She emphasized that the towns people will know exactly what they are being asked to approve when it comes time for Town Meeting on May 14<sup>th</sup>. She said that we should have more details about the problem confirmed by March 19<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Golota expressed his concern about the end of the repair process. He suggested including language in the contract to describe what the contractor would agree to do at the end of the project. Mr. O'Neil concurred, and said this language should be included when the contract is written.

On a motion by Mrs. Werner, seconded by Mr. O'Neil, the committee unanimously voted to award the design services contract for the NMS repairs to Russo-Barr, subject to appropriation, with the terms and conditions discussed for the contract.

**Vote to Approve Revised Budget Transfer Policy:**

Dr. Ansay explained that, according to M.G.L., Ch. 71, Section 337, as amended Chapter 71, Section 35, School Committees have the sole responsibility to review and approve budget transfers. She presented a revised budget transfer policy which requested the School Committee to approve the following transfers:

- Regular education budget salary lines to operating lines
- Regular education budget salaries or operating lines to special education, or the reverse
- Superintendent approval within regular or special education salary lines
- Superintendent approval within regular or special education operating lines

According to Dr. Ansay, the transfers described above, approved by the Superintendent, are necessary to keep the district operating. She explained that on occasion, decisions must be made immediately. When that happens, it would not be feasible to wait to acquire the School Committee approval for minor operating/salary transfers.

On a motion by Mr. O'Neil, seconded by Mr. Golota, the committee unanimously voted to approve the revised Budget Transfer Policy.

**Vote to Approve FY '08 School Operating Budget Figure:**

Dr. Ansay asked the committee to formally approve a budget figure for FY '08. Members were presented with two options: \$24,180,389 for Option 1, or \$24,442,772 for Option 2. She explained that these FY '08 requested budgets reflect a 6.43% and 7.59% increase respectively, or \$1,461,889 (Option 1) and \$1,724,272 (Option 2) increase over FY '07. Dr. Ansay further explained that in order for the Norton School System to continue to move forward, continuous improvement is a must. According to Dr. Ansay, the school department's budgets are developed after months of planning between the Superintendent, administrators, and the School Committee. She said the budgets are designed to not only bring educational services to a level commensurate with other area communities, but also to address deficiencies that have been identified through audits such as NEASC, CPR and EQA. The school and district-wide improvement plan initiatives are also funded through the school department's budget. According to Dr. Ansay, the school department budget depicts the district's educational philosophy in numbers. A budget figure, according to state law, must be sent to the town 90 days prior to Town Meeting. That date is February 13<sup>th</sup>. Amendments to this voted budget figure are allowed until Town Meeting.

On a motion by Mr. O'Neil, seconded by Mrs. Werner, the committee unanimously voted to formally approve a FY '08 budget figure of \$24,442,772.

**Vote to Accept Annual Town Meeting Articles:**

a. Article: Early Childhood Program Revolving Fund:

Dr. Ansay explained that the committee must yearly present this article for the continuation of the revolving fund.

b. Article: Middle School Roof Repairs:

Dr. Ansay explained that the committee must vote on the Article to be placed on the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting.

On a motion by Mr. Golota, seconded by Mr. O'Neil, the committee unanimously voted to approve these two Articles for Town Meeting.

**Personnel:****Retirement:**

a. Mr. Joseph Dery, NHS Social Studies Teacher, effective June 2007, after 34 years. The committee unanimously agreed to send a letter of appreciation to Mr. Dery for his many years of devoted service to the Norton Public Schools.

b. Mrs. Janet Farrell, NHS Technology Technician, effective June 2007.

**Leave of Absence (Half-Time):**

Mrs. Amy Berdos, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, K-12, for the 2007/2008 school year.

**Appointments:**

- a. Ms. Susannah Hansen, NHS Spanish Teacher, effective January 29th.
- b. Mrs. Janice Powers, SPED Administrative Secretary, effective February 5th.
- c. Mrs. Giovanna Sharpe, NHS SPED Educational Assistant, effective February 5th.
- d. Mrs. Sandra Bongarzone, LGN SPED Educational Assistant, effective February 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Other:**

On a motion by Mr. O'Neil, seconded by Mr. Golota, the committee unanimously voted to approve up to \$13,000 from the Middle School Building Account balance of \$21,000 for the purpose of covering expenses related to the creation of an engineering plan to delineate wetlands and construction by the D.P.W. of a second means of egress on the middle school property.

Dr. Ansay requested that the committee also approve 2 full-day Kindergarten programs for the Norton Public Schools. She explained that she had recently applied for a grant for the programs, and she has been awarded the grant. She further explained that some staff would need to be hired, and there would be a need to charge tuition. According to Dr. Ansay, participation would be voluntary and a lottery system would be employed. An Early Childhood Committee will be formed. Mrs. Gradie said full-day Kindergarten is exciting. Dr. Ansay concurred, and mentioned that there are some special education students who require a full-day Kindergarten program already. These students would not be required to pay. There would also be a sliding fee for those students approved to receive either free or reduced lunch.

Dr. Ansay assured the committee she would not ask them to approve a program that would be costly, knowing the financial constraints that are present. Mr. O'Neil thanked Dr. Ansay for her initiative in applying for the grant. He said he believes that many parents choose the Foxboro Charter School over the local school system because the Charter School offers full-day Kindergarten and foreign language at the early grades. He commended Dr. Ansay for addressing both of these matters with the programs she is proposing. According to Mr. O'Neil, the long term savings could be even greater for the school department if parents choose the Norton Public Schools instead of the Charter School.

On a motion by Mr. O'Neil, seconded by Mr. Golota, the committee unanimously voted to approve offering one session of full-day Kindergarten programming at the L.G. Nourse School and one session of full-day Kindergarten programming at the J. C. Solmonese School.

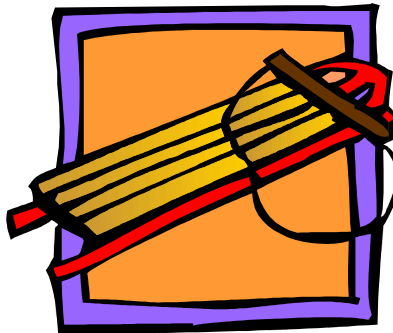
**Adjournment:**

On a motion by Mr. O'Neil, on a roll call vote, the committee unanimously voted to enter Executive Session at 8:25 pm.

**NEXT MEETING DATE:**

**Wednesday, February 21, 2007, Superintendent's Conference Room, H. A. Yelle Elementary School (at the conclusion of the Special Town Meeting)**

*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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