

NORTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Norton, Massachusetts

MEETING NOTES

TO: ALL STAFF MEMBERS
FROM: Patricia H. Ansay, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools
DATE: June 18, 2007

Date of School Committee Meeting: June 4, 2007

Location: Library, Norton Middle School

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

Call to Order: Chairman O'Neil called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm.

Review and Approval of Minutes of Prior Meetings:

Mr. O'Neil recommended two changes to the Minutes of prior meetings. He pointed out one change in the Executive Session Minutes of May 23rd. During this meeting, the vote was taken after Town Meeting to approve the repairs request. Mr. O'Neil also pointed out one change to the Regular Session Minutes of May 21st. During this meeting Mr. O'Neil had expressed concern about geometry. Currently, Norton students are not exposed to geometry until April of the school year.

On a motion by Mrs. Werner, seconded by Mr. Golota, the committee unanimously approved the Minutes of the prior meetings on May 21st and May 23rd, as amended.

Thank You Presentation to Larissa Weiner, Student Representative:

Chairman O'Neil thanked outgoing Student Representative Larissa Weiner and awarded her a citation of appreciation in recognition of her service to the Norton School Committee from 2005 to 2007. He announced that Miss Weiner will be attending Johnson and Whales University next year and plans to major in Event Planning. Mr. O'Neil commended Miss Weiner for her level of commitment, and thanked her for all of her dedication. Dr. Ansay presented Miss Weiner with flowers and the Committee wished her well in her future.

Policy - Surveillance Cameras:

Dr. Ansay announced that she has been working closely with the Norton Police Department in the development of this policy. She explained that several of our schools, namely the middle and high schools, utilize video cameras disbursed throughout the buildings. Generally, the only individuals to go back and view tapes from such cameras

are school administration. These cameras are not monitored by someone on a consistent basis. Instead, if an incident occurs and a vice-principal or principal is trying to conduct an investigation and determine the facts, he or she can view the tapes of any given day and time. Dr. Ansay explained the purpose of the new policy which allows the Norton Police Department access to these tapes on a conditional emergency basis. She encouraged the committee to approve this new important policy, and introduced Detective Jacob Dennett of the Norton Police Department who was on hand to answer questions about the policy.

Mr. Mackie suggested that the school district's attorney should review this new policy before a vote is taken on it. He also suggested that there should be some "checks and balances" included in the policy so that those who follow it are proceeding as judiciously as possible. Mr. O'Neil asked Mr. Mackie if he wanted to amend the policy. Mr. Mackie consulted with Detective Dennett, who spoke about the importance of responding immediately to a threat of danger. Detective Dennett cautioned the committee about amending the policy. He emphasized that a response to a threat is necessary in a matter of minutes. He said, "We don't want to be stuck by this policy."

Mrs. Werner agreed that it would be important for the school district's attorney to look over the policy. Mrs. McManus made a motion to accept the new Surveillance Camera policy as written, once it is approved by the school district's attorney. Mr. Golota seconded the motion. On a 4-1 vote, the committee approved the policy with this condition. Mr. Mackie voted against approving the policy.

Lunch Price Increase:

Mrs. Irene Stanovitch, Cafeteria Director, was in attendance to present her proposal for a \$.50 increase in the price of a student meal for next year, and \$.25 more for the following year. The figure of \$.50 was arrived at by utilizing meal pricing guidelines as suggested by the Department of Education. Guidelines for lunch prices are available on the web. Dr. Ansay explained that she had asked Mrs. Stanovitch to compare lunch prices in surrounding communities. The committee was presented with an analysis which compared costs related to preparing a student meal. She also pointed out that Norton has not had a cost increase in the price of a student meal in four years. Mrs. Stanovitch explained that the lunch program is in jeopardy at this time because it is beginning to lose money. She also proposed raising the price of an adult lunch to \$3.00 this coming year, and \$3.25 the following year.

Dr. Ansay pointed out that the recommended increases are in line with what surrounding communities are charging. She explained that our food service program will also be reducing costs now that we are purchasing supplies from a collaborative, via the TEC bid. She said she supports the lunch price increase proposal and believes it is a little overdue. Mr. Mackie said he believes the school lunches are not healthy. Mrs. Stanovitch

emphasized that the school district now follows the new Wellness policy guidelines, and assured Mr. Mackie that the school lunches are healthy. Mr. Mackie argued that he would not be in favor of increasing the lunch prices until he is convinced that the lunches are healthy.

Mr. O'Neil suggested that Mrs. Stanovitch could put together a grid of surrounding communities which compares the features of the food they offer. Mrs. Stanovitch agreed to do so. Mrs. Werner pointed out the price of food has gone up. She said no matter what we do, the federal government is still going to give us only 9 cents for every dollar we spend in education. She pointed out that she believes the school lunches are healthy and noted the many fruit choices and the wheat bread offered. Mrs. Stanovitch also commented that the new breakfast program is proceeding very well, and she is considering trying out a salad bar at the high school.

Mr. Mackie emphasized again that he believes the school lunches are not healthy. Mrs. Stanovich defended the food choices which are offered, pointing out that the Wellness policy has been implemented in the Norton schools. Mr. O'Neil asked Mrs. Stanovitch if she could work on the comparison chart of food offered in surrounding communities, and return to another meeting with her proposal. Mrs. Stanovitch agreed and the committee postponed a vote on the lunch price increase proposal.

Science Curriculum Presentation:

Mrs. Amy Berdos, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, was present to discuss the K-12 updated Science Curriculum. Dr. Ansay explained that this curriculum, like all others, is slated to be updated every five years. She said science is now high-stakes and therefore is a priority. As a result, the Science Curriculum work was addressed before the Social Studies Curriculum, which is next in line. She said currently the history document is being worked on. She also mentioned that the current Science/Technology Curriculum has not been updated since 2000. The Science Curriculum Revision Committee has been working for quite sometime to update the current curriculum document for science, technology, and engineering. Dr. Ansay explained that this document includes categories that present guidelines for learning, for teaching and for assessment. She explained that all of the changes made in the 2006 Massachusetts Science & Technology/Engineering framework have been addressed and included in this new 2007 curriculum.

Mrs. Berdos outlined these changes in detail with her presentation. She explained that the changes include a realignment of standards at each grade level. She said the curriculum is intended to expand Norton students' knowledge in the four areas of science, those being earth/space science, life science, physical science, and technology/engineering. According to Dr. Ansay, one of the most impressive features of the new curriculum is "vertical articulation". Each grade level of the new curriculum has been reviewed by teachers at a grade level below and a grade level above. This is an

attempt to eliminate any gaps in learning that students may have previously encountered. The new curriculum comes with a component called "Curriculum Maps" for each grade level, which outline major areas of focus at each grade level.

Mr. Peter Leddy, Science Department Chairperson at Norton High School, was also on hand to answer any questions about the new Science Curriculum. In addition, science teachers from the school district attended the meeting to show their support for the new curriculum, and answer any questions.

Mr. O'Neil asked how the current dialog will be maintained to be sure the new Science Curriculum is working once it is approved. Mrs. Berdos explained that both the middle school and high school teachers have content level meetings which take place before and after school.

Mr. Mackie commended Mrs. Berdos for her presentation and said he believes the new Science Curriculum looks excellent. Mr. Leddy pointed out that once the curriculum is approved it will be put on Edline. Mrs. Werner thanked Mrs. Berdos and the Science Curriculum Revision Committee for all of their efforts. Dr. Ansay pointed out that the science labs at the high school are very outdated, and yet, the students have been able to get what they need because of the hard work of our staff. Mr. O'Neil said he hopes the new Science Curriculum will have an impact on the MCAS scores for 5th Grade science. He thanked Mrs. Berdos and Mr. Leddy for a great presentation and thanked all the staff members who attended.

On a motion by Mr. Golota, seconded by Mr. Mackie, the committee unanimously approved the new Science Curriculum.

Approval of Out-of-State Football Camp in Maine:

Ms. Terri Pillsbury, Athletic Director, was on hand to present a request from members of the Norton High School football team to attend a football camp in Maine during the month of August. Dr. Ansay noted that Ms. Pillsbury's correspondence to the Committee provides them with considerable information. Ms. Pillsbury explained that permission slips will be issued which will contain insurance and emergency information. Mr. Rob McCoy, head football coach at Norton High School, was also present to answer any questions and discuss the request.

Mr. O'Neil commended Ms. Pillsbury for her excellent letter to the committee. He said she addressed every single possible question in her letter, and that obviously this request has been very well thought out. Mr. Golota asked about the team building activities which would be planned for the students. Ms. Pillsbury said the activities will be competitions to help the students enrich themselves as both athletes and as people. Coach McCoy explained that the students will be participating in different fun activities which

they can rally around, in addition to football practice. He said the specifics will be decided upon once an approval is finalized. Several members of the high school football team were on hand to show their support for the proposal. They spoke to the committee to support this chance to bond as a team and become friends before the season begins.

On a motion by Mrs. Werner, seconded by Mr. Golota, the committee voted 5-0 to approve Norton's attendance at an out-of-state football camp in Maine.

School Improvement Plans: Mrs. Farrell & Mr. Dewar:

The final two principals were present to discuss their School Improvement Plans this evening. Dr. Ansay pointed out that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees recommends that School Committees approve individual School Improvement Plans. She asked the committee to keep in mind that these School Improvement Plans were revised during the process of the creation of the Strategic Plan for the school system, and the District's Improvement Plan. She reminded the Committee that Dr. George Ladd of Boston College worked very closely with each of the building principals to ensure that the School Improvement Plans were not only data driven, but focused on improving student achievement. She pointed out that this time around, the School Improvement Plans are more specific and focused on areas that need improvement.

Mrs. Farrell, Principal of the Henri A. Yelle Elementary School, was on hand to present her School Improvement Plan first. She discussed her new programs to enhance vocabulary. She also mentioned she has worked to improve MCAS scores at her school. Mrs. Farrell explained that she has given the Yelle students weekly MCAS homework assignments, and has corrected these assignments. She discussed the "Homework Heroes" program which was very successful this year. She also mentioned the "Junior Great Books" program she did with the students, and explained that the Yelle students have experienced a great deal of growth this year. She hopes they will be able to continue with these programs.

Dr. Ansay commended the Yelle staff, and noted that they recently stayed after school to become proficient at the "William and Mary Curriculum". Mrs. Farrell concurred and praised the Yelle staff for their dedication and commitment. She said that the programs she has been able to implement with her staff, have been the "life" which makes her School Improvement Plan a "living document".

Mrs. Werner commended Mrs. Farrell, saying she has done a fabulous job, and mentioned that Mrs. Farrell's recent presentation for the 3rd Grade parents was very comforting for them. Mrs. McManus noted that next year, Mrs. Farrell will be receiving some students with severe special needs at her school. She asked what effect this may have. Mrs. Farrell said right now she is trying to make sure that these students and their staff will feel comfortable at the Yelle School.

Mr. O'Neil asked Mrs. Farrell if she could include something in her School Improvement Plan about the positive impact that is expected from the new Science Curriculum. Mrs. Farrell agreed. He said the 5th Grade MCAS Science scores have been a concern, and it might be good to note this in the School Improvement Plan. Mrs. Farrell concurred and explained that she is striving to set improvement goals which are realistic and attainable for the Yelle students.

On a motion by Mr. Mackie, seconded by Mrs. Werner, the committee unanimously voted to approve the School Improvement Plan for the Henri A. Yelle School.

Mr. Raymond Dewar, Principal of Norton High School, was on hand to present his School Improvement Plan next. Mr. Dewar thanked all of the Senior Advisors who did a super job this year, especially Mrs. Gibson, Mrs. Staab and Mrs. Desmond. In addition, he thanked Mrs. Donna Kilburn and Mrs. Karen Robbins, high school secretaries, and Mr. Thomas Withers, Head Custodian at Norton High School, and the custodial staff.

Mrs. Werner commended Mr. Dewar and said she believes he is doing a very good job. Mrs. McManus concurred and pointed out that student behavior at Class Night and Graduation was excellent. Mr. Dewar discussed the increased number of students who are going on to higher education after graduation. He said the statistics are amazing. Mr. Dewar said that the large number of students going on into engineering and medicine really speaks volumes about the math and science program at the high school. He pointed out that we still need to involve the students more in "service" to others. Dr. Ansary and Mr. Golota both commended Mr. Dewar on an outstanding graduation ceremony.

Mr. Dewar also discussed the need to expose high school students to more poetry. He said the staff is trying to push the students beyond their comfort level to believe that they can accomplish more. He discussed the classroom "walk throughs" he has taken at the high school, and how helpful these have been. Mr. Dewar explained that the "walk throughs" give him more of a comfort level with the students and allow him to see what really goes on in the classes. He said he is very optimistic about the summer reading program because it will help develop critical thinking skills and problem solving skills. Mr. Dewar explained that getting students to read, write, problem solve, and apply their knowledge elsewhere is what we are really trying to do. He said now we are addressing improvements in a systematic way. Mr. Dewar also pointed out that if the science labs are ever brought up to snuff, the students will be able to do fantastic things. He commended the science and math departments for trying to be creative.

On a motion by Mr. Golota, seconded by Mrs. Werner, the committee unanimously accepted the School Improvement Plan at Norton High School.

Proposed NHS Handbook Changes:

Mr. Dewar presented a proposal to the committee outlining Student Hand Book revisions. Mr. O'Neil thanked Mr. Dewar for his presentation. He also pointed out that the Site Council has authority over these changes, and therefore the School Committee will not need to vote this.

Vote to Award Athletic Bids:

Ms. Pillsbury was also on hand to present the committee with the Athletic bid. The committee reviewed a list of the items to be awarded. Ms. Pillsbury explained that this list contains the lowest responsible bidders for FY '08. The total cost of the bid is \$16,324.89.

Ms. Pillsbury pointed out that the uniforms do not have a dollar amount on the bid. She further explained that no bids were received on the uniforms. She said she intends to solicit verbal bids from local uniform companies. Dr. Ansay suggested that the committee may wish to approve the Equipment and Supplies portion of the Athletic bid.

Mr. Golota made a motion to award the Athletic bids for Equipment and Supplies only. Mrs. McManus seconded the motion. On a 5-0 vote, the committee unanimously approved the Athletic bids for Equipment and Supplies.

Vote to Approve SPED Transportation Contract Extension for Kiessling Transportation:

Dr. Ansay then presented the Special Education Transportation Contract extension for Kiessling Transportation. She explained that Kiessling Transportation took over for the Norton school department from Transcomm at the beginning of the school year in September. She said it has been a good working relationship. Dr. Ansay further explained that we do have a letter from Mr. Lars Kiessling, CFO for Kiessling Transit, Inc., stating that Kiessling is waiving the 2.9% increase listed in the renewal portion of the contract (estimated \$510,000). As a result, there will be no increases in cost for the FY '08 school year. She said we have a contract with them, dated September 6, 2006. According to Dr. Ansay, we are just looking to extend that contract for an additional school year, and on a side note, she said members of the SPOKE Collaborative have also voted to do the same, and that includes Easton and Foxboro.

On a motion by Mr. Golota, seconded by Mrs. Werner, the committee unanimously voted to approve the Special Education Transportation Contract extension for Kiessling Transportation.

Vote to Award Floor Tile Bid:

Dr. Ansay then presented the floor tiling bid for the L.G. Nourse School, H.A. Yelle School and Norton High School. She encouraged the committee to approve the award to Capital Carpeting and Flooring Specialists for \$52,295. She explained that references were checked and individuals were spoken to regarding performance on prior "like" projects. She said we went out to bid and this contractor was the lowest responsible bidder. Dr. Ansay further explained that the work will be done prior to June 30th. She said this is something that has needed to be done for awhile so we can address some asbestos issues and repair some flooring that was damaged by excessive water and humidity at the high school and several of the floods that occurred at the Yelle School. Dr. Ansay pointed out that the project will be partially funded by insurance money, the regular budget, and possibly Capital Improvement or our Facility Rental funds.

On a motion by Mrs. Werner, seconded by Mr. Golota, the committee unanimously voted to award the floor tiling bid to Capital Carpeting and Flooring Specialists for \$52,295.

Vote to Award Elevator Maintenance/Repairs Bid:

Dr. Ansay then presented the elevator maintenance/repairs bid for the Norton school district. She encouraged the committee to approve the award to Eagle Elevator Company of Boston, for the sum of \$5,700 (\$8,400 minus Town's portion of \$2,700), the lowest responsible bidder. She explained that the bid had to be reissued, as the former elevator company that had responded to our bid of this past year was unclear as to some terms of the contract and was not entirely certain that they could live up to the terms of the contract for a second year. Therefore, the school district went out to bid, and Dr. Ansay said she believes this is a good price. She said Eagle Elevator Company does understand all specifics of the contract. She said this contract will go until June 30, 2008.

On a motion by Mr. Mackie, seconded by Mr. Golota, the committee unanimously voted to award the elevator maintenance/repairs bid to the Eagle Elevator Company of Boston for \$5,700.

Vote to Award Fire Alarm Repairs/Service Bid:

Dr. Ansay explained that this vote will be postponed until she is able to get back to committee about this bid.

Vote to Renew Service Contracts Bids:

Dr. Ansay explained that the bids went out last year for our service contracts. She said this is just a renewal of those bids, awarded as follows: Electrical Services to Bleu Electric, Boiler Burner Services to Johnson Controls, Burglar Alarm Repairs/Services to

HELP, Inc., HVAC/Pneumatic Controls Services to Mechanical Air Controls, Pest Control Services to Flynn Pest Control, Septic System Services to Soares Sanitation/Plumbing, Inc., Glass Repair/Repairment Services to Strojny Glass Company, AC/Refrigeration Services to Johnson Controls, and lastly , Plumbing Services to C.P. Rich Plumbing & Heating Company of Norton. She said these changes in these contracts include a rated increase of 3.6% as indicated by the consumer price index for northeast wage earners, which is available on the web. She said all contracts will expire on June 30, 2008.

On a motion by Mrs. Werner, seconded by Mr. Golota, the committee unanimously voted to renew the service contract bids.

Vote to Direct the Superintendent to Submit MSBA Letter of Intent for Middle School Repairs to MSBA and Selectboard:

Dr. Ansay explained that she has put together a letter of intent and will be asking members to approve her sending this letter to the Selectboard to ask for its approval. She said if she is successful with that, she will submit this Letter of Intent to the SBA in an effort to acquire some reimbursement for the Norton Middle School Roof/Flashing project. Dr. Ansay pointed out that the priority for this Letter of Intent would be basically a Priority 1, “renovation of a building which is structurally unsound or otherwise in a condition jeopardizing the health and safety of school children where no alternative exists”. She said she was required to submit not only the report from Russo-Barr, but also a letter from a Town Board of Health official. She said she received correspondence from Leon Dumont, Health Agent for the Town of Norton.

On a motion by Mr. Golota, seconded by Mrs. Werner, the committee unanimously voted to direct the Superintendent to submit the MSBA Letter of Intent for the Norton Middle School repairs to the Selectboard, as written on the Letter of Intent form.

School Bldg Authority (postponed from last time):

On a motion by Mrs. Werner, seconded by Mr. Golota, the Committee unanimously voted to authorize Dr. Ansay to submit a Statement of Interest, as detailed on the Massachusetts School Building Authority form, to the SBA for renovations to Norton High School. This Statement of Interest would be submitted after approval by the Selectboard. Dr. Ansay explained that a Statement of Interest is not an application. That will come next if the project gets put on the list.

On June 7, 2007, the Board of Selectmen convened in accordance with its Charter by-laws, and ordinances, and voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the MSBA a Statement of Interest for Norton Middle School, which describes and explains the following deficiencies in the Priority category for which Norton may be invited to apply

to the MSBA in the future: Priority 1, “replacement or renovation of a building which is structurally unsound or otherwise in a condition seriously jeopardizing the health and safety of school children where no alternative exists, as determined in the judgment of the Authority.”

Receive and Place on File NHS Student Representative to the School Committee, 2007 - 2008:

Dr. Ansay explained that according to Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 7, Section 38, the Student Advisory Committee of the Student Council must, by the first day of June in each year, elect from its membership a chairperson who shall serve for a term of one year as representative to the School Committee. This individual will be invited to attend all School Committee meetings, with the exception of executive sessions, and shall be a non-voting member. Dr. Ansay announced that Miss Emily Carmichael will be the new Student Representative to the School Committee for the 2007-2008 school year.

User Fees:

Dr. Ansay explained that Mr. O’Neil requested that this item be placed on the agenda. A discussion ensued about User Fees and discontinuing athletics, and any possible increase in fees in the event that the override is unsuccessful.

Receive and Place on File "Plans of HS Graduates - NHS"

Personnel:

Retirement:

Mrs. Natalie MacDonald, NMS Grade 7 Social Studies Teacher, who began teaching in Norton in 1972.

Resignation:

Mrs. Allison Clarke, NHS French Teacher, effective, June 19, 2007.

Mrs. Judith Kearney, NHS Cafeteria Assistant, effective June 19, 2007.

Leave of Absence:

Mrs. Jennifer Carline, HAY Grade 5 Teacher, effective November 2007, for approximately 20 weeks.

OTHER:

Dr. Ansay discussed a request to declare a piece of special education equipment as surplus. She explained that the school district has no use for this piece of equipment. She further explained that this equipment belonged to a student who used it in an out-of-district placement. A discussion ensued. On a motion by Mr. Mackie, seconded by Mr. Golota, the committee unanimously voted to approve this request.

Dr. Ansay also discussed the need to have some help with the Principal Search Committee at the L.G. Nourse School. The committee nominated Mr. Werner to participate on this committee. The nomination was approved.

Adjournment:

On a motion by Mr. Golota, seconded by Mr. Mackie, the committee unanimously voted to adjourn at 10:25 pm.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

Monday, June 18, 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 have not been officially approved by the committee.

The Norton Public School System does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion or sexual orientation.