

*Natick Public Schools
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
May 22, 2017*

The School Committee held a meeting on Monday, May 22, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. Chair Tabenkin called the meeting to order at 6:50 p.m. in the Training Room, 3rd floor, Town Hall.

Members Present: Paul Laurent, David Mangan, Julie McDonough, Donna McKenzie, Hayley Sonneborn, Lisa Tabenkin

Members Absent: Firkins Reed

Others Present:	Peter Sanchioni	Superintendent of Schools
	Timothy Luff	Assistant Superintendent
	Marianne Davis	Director of Human Resources
	Sharon Reilly	Recording Secretary

Mr. Laurent moved to enter Executive Session to discuss strategy in respect to Collective Bargaining (EAN) in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 30A, Section 21(a) of the Massachusetts General Laws. Ms. Sonneborn seconded. By roll call vote all members were in favor of entering into Executive Session.

At 7:15, p.m. the School Committee returned to the School Committee Room for its regular meeting. Others who joined at this time included:

Peter Gray	Director of Finance
Ratnakar Amaravadi	Teacher Representative
Will Cuozzo	Student Representative
Hannah Savoia	Student Representative

Public Speak

Chair Tabenkin asked if anyone wished to come forward for Public Speak. No one came forward.

Members Concerns

Chair Tabenkin announced that the After Prom Party was once again an amazing success. She introduced Kim Chamberlain and Jennifer Hall, Chairs of the After Prom Party, who came forward and spoke about the event. They were thrilled that 582 students attended the party this year. They had over 150 volunteers working through the night from midnight through 5:00 a.m. They were overwhelmed by the exorbitant support they received from the community. Planning for this party is a year-long commitment that is parent driven with many volunteers. It was a wonderful evening for the students, keeping them safe in a fun environment on prom night. They reported that the students were very well behaved and represented

the community very well. Members of the School Committee thanked all who were involved in making this a successful evening.

Homework Procedures –K-12

Mr. Brian Harrigan, Principal of Natick High School, introduced four Natick High School seniors: Joyce Libbin, Rebecca Jacobs, Tatiana Slotnick, and Adam Tabenkin. These students participated with Mr. Harrigan in a year-long Independent Study Class where they met once per week and focused on how our students at Natick High School are experiencing stress. The students came forward and presented the work they did over the course of the year in this study group:

They:

- Organized and ran a stress table at the Wellness Fair
- Read *Overloaded and Underprepared* and discussed in class
- Read a variety of articles on homework and student stress
- Led focus groups with students
- Survey of students (NHS and MetroWest) – received over 1200 responses.

They provide the following outline and spoke to these sources of stress.

- Social Stress
 - Bullying
 - Social Media
 - Transitions
- Outside Stress
 - Extracurricular Activities
 - Standardized Testing
 - College Process
- Assessments
 - Grades
 - Projects and Tests
 - Academic Integrity
- Homework
 - Volume of HW
 - Value of HW
 - Time Management

The students presented their recommendations to reduce stress and spoke to the following:

- Academic Support
 - Workshops
 - CDS, Study hall, Cafeteria study
 - Quieter workspaces
 - Emphasis on HW value
 - Time management calculator

- Self-Advocacy
 - Introduction in 9th grade
- Transitions
 - Music in hallway transitions
 - Freshman orientation
- Social Support
 - Therapy dog
 - Trusted adults
 - Raise student participation

The students responded to questions from Committee members. Committee members thanked the students for their amazing and informative presentation.

The Principals (Elementary, Middle School and High School) provided comprehensive presentations on the value and efficiency of homework which focused on designing homework tasks that inform instruction and advance student learning. Throughout the year, latest research on homework has been reviewed, practices of other districts were examined, and input/surveys from all constituents were conducted. All this led to their outlined recommendations and procedures which will be operationalized next year. Dr. Sanchioni urged Committee members to review the information and forward him any questions they may have.

NHS Therapy Dog

Mr. Brian Harrigan introduced Ms. Tara McDonald, NHS School Librarian, who came before the School Committee to speak to Natick High School's new Therapy Dog, a gift from the class of 2017. Ms. McDonald provided some background information on the dog and the purpose she will serve. Ms. McDonald will also be the caregiver of the dog, bringing her to and from her home every day.

The dog is a 5-month-old, Labradoodle chosen for her temperament and hypoallergenic qualities. She will start her job this year as the NHS Service Dog. The dog is currently in training to become a licensed therapy dog. Therapy dogs are highly obedient service animals trained to provide affection and comfort to people.

The purpose for Dog's inclusion at NHS is to:

- Reduce students' stress and anxiety
- Facilitate students' learning lessons in responsibility, respect, and empathy
- Strengthen sense of school community

Numerous research-based studies on incorporating service dogs into school settings have shown many student benefits.

Ms. McDonald provided the School Committee with copies of a letters going to faculty members and parents as well as procedures to be followed for students and faculty. The Class of 2017 will shortly be voting on a name for the dog.

Elementary Principals Professional Practice Goal – Literacy Presentation

Ms. Karen Ghilani, Principal of Bennett-Hemenway School, Mr. Kirk Downing, Principal of Brown School, Ms. Jordan Hoffman, Principal Johnson School and Ms. Susan Balboni, Principal of Memorial School came before the School Committee to present their progress towards their Professional Practice Goal – Literacy Instruction).

Topics covered included:

- Time on Task for Literacy
- Examination of Common Assessments
- Examination of Intervention & Use of Literacy Specialists
- Data Team Practices
- Technology & Literacy
- Teachers4Teachers Training
- Classroom Literacy Resources
- Recommendations for the Future

Questions were asked and responded to. Principals were commended for their work in this area.

Update on Kennedy Middle School Building Committee

Dr. Sanchioni reported that the Kennedy Middle School Building Committee will be meeting this Thursday at 6:30 p.m. On Wednesday, May 31, the first community forum on the Kennedy Middle School Project, will be held at Kennedy at 7:00 p.m. Residents of the neighboring streets have been invited to attend as well as other interested parties.

Report on Warrants Signed

In accordance with School Committee Procedures, Mr. Gray reviewed the following warrants signed by the School Committee Chair:

Warrant Type	Warrant Number	Date Signed	Amount
Accounts Payable	2017-46S	05/8/2017	\$ 470,652.64
Accounts Payable	2017-47S	05/8/2017	\$ 530,127.74

If anyone wishes to review the details regarding any of these warrants please feel to contact Mr. Gray.

Subcommittee/Liaison Updates

Ms. Sonneborn reported that she recently attended a Natick Together for Youth (NTY) meeting and was very impressed with their work. They are currently looking for nominations for their Community Champion Award - someone who embodies the NTY mission. If anyone has any nominations, please forward to them by this Friday. Secondly, they are in the beginning stages of creating a Task Force around

the opting out initiative for a marijuana dispensary in the town. It will be important for community members to get involved in legislation around dispensaries. Anyone interested in being on this Task Force should reach out to Katie Sugarman.

At 10:10 p.m., Mr. Mangan moved to adjourn. Mr. Laurent seconded. It was unanimously approved.

Attest: _____

Peter Sanchioni, Ph.D.
Superintendent
Secretary to the School Committee

Sharon Reilly
Recording Secretary

Documents provided in Novus Agenda

Report on Warrants Signed

Literacy Presentation

NHS Report on “How Do We Reduce Student Stress”

Homework Procedures Presentations – HS, MS, Elementary

NHS Therapy Dog Presentation