

NORTH MIDDLESEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Ashby - Pepperell - Townsend, Massachusetts

MINUTES

Tuesday, May 27, 2014
North Middlesex Regional High School

PRESENT

Chairperson	Susan Robbins	Member, Townsend
Vice Chairperson	Jonna Clermont	Member, Pepperell
	Anne Adams	Member, Pepperell
	Brian Edmonds	Member, Pepperell
	Crystal Epstein	Member, Ashby
	William Hackler	Member, At Large
	Michael Morgan	Member, At Large
	Randee Rusch	Member, At Large

ALSO

PRESENT

Joan Landers	Superintendent of Schools
Nancy Haines	Business Manager
District Staff	
Students	
Parents/Community Members	
Press	

ABSENT

Robert Templeton	Member, Townsend
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1. The meeting was called to order at 7: 02 PM.
2. The Chairperson informed the Committee and audience members of the recording of the meeting.
3. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the North Middlesex Regional School Committee will be held on Monday, June 09, 2014 at North Middlesex Regional High School at 7:00 PM.

PRESENTATION

NMRHS Student Tyler Ferolito presented his senior project video on the North Middlesex Regional High School. The Superintendent and Committee members commended Tyler on his project and agreed to post it on the district's website.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Jonna Clermont and Brian Edmonds to approve the following consent agenda items:

1. Approval of Minutes:
 - May 12, 2014
2. Out of State Field Trip Request:
 - Hawthorne Brook Band Students to Newport, RI on June 17, 2014
3. Acceptance of Donation:
 - \$1,000 donation to North Middlesex Regional High School from Hannaford Bros (Hannaford Helps Schools Program)

The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Randee Rusch and seconded by Jonna Clermont to approve the May 7, 2014 school committee work session minutes.

The motion passed 7-0-1. Mrs. Adams abstained.

REPORTS/INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Superintendent's Report

Update on Administrative Searches - Superintendent Landers informed the Committee that the district will be conducting a search to fill the Director of Special Education & Varnum Brook Elementary School Principal positions due to retirements and is looking for volunteers to serve on the search committees. Interested individuals were asked to contact the Superintendent.

2. Public Communications - Anne Adams requested that it be stated for the record that the payment of class dues is voluntary and the failure to pay class dues does not prohibit students from participating in school activities. A copy of the class dues policy is posted on the district website and referenced in the high school handbook.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Warrant Subcommittee

Available for Committee review are Accounts Payable Warrant: 14-0515 and payroll warrant: 5/8/14. The warrants have been reviewed and signed by the Warrant Subcommittee.

2. Policy Subcommittee – Policy 1st Readings

a. A motion was made by Brian Edmonds and seconded by Jonna Clermont to approve the 1st reading of Policy GBGB Staff Personal Security and Safety. The motion passed unanimously.

b. A motion was made by Jonna Clermont and seconded by Anne Adams to approve the 1st reading of Policy GBED Tobacco Use on School Property By Staff Members. The motion passed unanimously.

c. A motion was made by Jonna Clermont and seconded by Brian Edmonds to approve the 1st reading of Policy JJE Student Fund Raising Activities. A brief discussion ensued. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0-1. Mr. Hackler abstained.

OLD BUSINESS

1. School Lunch Price Increase – Discussion/Vote

This item was passed over.

2. High School Bell Schedule – Discussion/Vote

The Superintendent of Schools recommended the following:

That the North Middlesex Regional High School bell schedule remain as a 4 X 4 block schedule with the following modification for the 2014-2015 school year:

- IMM 1 & IMM2 courses for Freshmen & Sophomores will be a full year course
- IMM 3 course for Juniors will be an optional one semester course or full year course
- Advanced Placement Courses would be run three quarters (3/4) of year with weekly after-school and/or Saturday review sessions to be provided in the few weeks leading up to the administration of the AP exam

A discussion on the recommendation continued.

The Superintendent informed the Committee that a survey was conducted on the bell schedule. Thirty-three (33) percent of the respondents were in favor of a schedule change, 33% were not in favor and 33% indicated no preference.

Jonna Clermont spoke in favor of voting for the Superintendent's recommendation but keeping AP courses as full year for 2014-2015.

Anne Adams shared information she received from conversations she had with area school districts and college and university admission offices relative to the IMM program. She stated that the responses varied but many with whom she spoke were not familiar with the IMM program.

Principal Battye stated that data on the success of the IMM program would be available in the fall when the district receives the MCAS results. She stated that it is not unusual for colleges/universities to be unfamiliar with changes in common core standards.

A motion was made by Jonna Clermont and seconded by Mike Morgan to keep the 4 X 4 block schedule for 2014-2015 with the modifications for IMM as follows: 1) IMM 1 & IMM2 courses for Freshmen & Sophomores will be a full year course; 2) IMM 3 course for Juniors will be an optional one semester course or full year course and to keep the AP courses as full year courses.

A discussion ensued.

Brian Edmonds requested that the Committee vote on each item separately.

A discussion ensued. Committee members agreed that if they wanted to vote line by line, they should vote no on the motion.

Brian Edmonds stated that he is not comfortable with mathematics courses running more than any other course and suggested offering two pathways for mathematics.

Randee Rusch shared a comment she received from a parent about the possibility of exploring an AB model. Principal Battye stated that several scheduling models were explored.

The Chair opened up the floor to the audience.

Students and parents in the audience addressed the Committee and shared their concern that the current schedule is too restrictive and does not allow students to take electives. They spoke in support of a schedule change for next year which would increase opportunities for students.

A discussion on the motion continued.

Members of the high school administration answered questions from the Committee.

Director of Special Education Linda Rakiey was asked to discuss the difficulties a schedule change might cause. She stated that special education students are further inhibited by the 4 X 4 block schedule. She said she was in favor of a schedule change; however, in order to move to a new schedule, time is needed to develop an implementation plan and to train staff. Mrs. Rakiey explained that a schedule change would require holding all new IEP meetings for students and the creation of a new service delivery pattern.

A current NMRHS student spoke in favor of keeping the 4 X 4 block schedule.

Mike Morgan asked about the financial impact if the district switched to a modified block 5 X 8 schedule next year.

Brian Edmonds asked if students were being wait listed by colleges/universities because of the current 4 X 4 block schedule. The administration stated that there is no statistical data available on wait listing.

A parent in the audience stated that their child was denied a course path due to the current block schedule.

A roll call vote on the motion on the floor was taken:

Jonna Clermont-yes; Anne Adams-no; Crystal Epstein-no; Michael Morgan-no; William Hackler-no; Brian Edmonds-no; Randee Rusch-no; Susan Robbins-yes.

The motion failed by a vote of 2-6.

A motion was made by Brian Edmonds and seconded by Anne Adams to remain with the current 4 X 4 block schedule for 2014-2015.

A roll call vote was taken:

Jonna Clermont-yes; Crystal Epstein-no; Anne Adams-yes; William Hackler-no; Michael Morgan-no; Brian Edmonds yes; Randee Rusch-no; Susan Robbins-yes.

The motion failed by a vote of 4-4.

Committee members took turns explaining their reasons for casting their vote.

A motion was made by Crystal Epstein and seconded by William Hackler that beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, the North Middlesex Regional High School bell schedule be changed to a 8 day rotating modified block schedule with 5 instructional blocks, each 70 minutes in length, with 4 minutes of passing time between each instructional block. There would be 3, 30 minute lunch periods with 3 minutes of passing time between each lunch. The 4th block would be longer to accommodate lunches and instructional time would remain constant.

A discussion on the motion ensued.

Brian Edmonds shared information from the recent student survey that was conducted on the bell schedule. He stated that 86% of the student respondents were in favor of the current block schedule.

A roll call vote was taken:

Jonna Clermont-no; Crystal Epstein-yes; Anne Adams-no; Michael Morgan-yes; William Hackler-yes; Brian Edmonds-no; Randee Rusch-yes; Susan Robbins-yes.

The motion passed by a vote of 5-3.

Randee Rusch left the meeting at 9:48 PM.

A motion was made by Crystal Epstein and seconded by William Hackler to enter into collective bargaining with the NMRSD Teachers Association immediately relative to the change to the high school schedule.

A roll call vote was taken:

Crystal Epstein-yes; Anne Adams-no; Michael Morgan-yes; William Hackler-yes; Brian Edmonds-no; Jonna Clermont-no; Susan Robbins-yes.

The motion passed by a vote of 4-3.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Approval of Special Education Transportation Contract – Discussion/Vote

A motion was made by Jonna Clermont and seconded by Michael Morgan to approve the three-year transportation contract for special education transportation services with Van Pool Transportation LLC, effective July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2017.

A roll call vote was taken:

Jonna Clermont-yes; Crystal Epstein-yes; Anne Adams-yes; Michael Morgan-no; William Hackler-yes; Brian Edmonds-no; Susan Robbins-yes.

The motion passed by a vote of 5-2.

2. District Goals/Accomplishments - Copies of the Goals/Accomplishments for 2013-14 were distributed.
3. Superintendent Evaluation Process – The Chair provided a brief overview of the process for Superintendent Evaluation. Copies of the Superintendent’s SMART goals for 2014-2015 were distributed. The Chair suggested Committee members review the goals and accomplishment and provide feedback individually to the Superintendent on the goals.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- PARCC Participation
- TELL Survey

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by William Hackler and seconded by Jonna Clermont to adjourn.
The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Landry, Secretary