

**NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
Monday, October 3 2011**

**Newburyport High School
Meeting Convened at 7:05 PM**

**Room 118
Bruce Menin Presided**

Present: Steve Cole (arrived at 8:07) , Cheryl Sweeney, Bruce Menin,
Stephanie Weaver, Nick deKanter, Dan Koen
Absent: Mayor Donna Holaday

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Vice-Chairman Bruce Menin called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM. All those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

READING OF MISSION STATEMENT:

Bruce Menin read the Newburyport School Committee Mission Statement.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment at this time.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Motions

Warrants:

On a motion by Cheryl Sweeney and seconded by Stephanie Weaver it was

VOTED: To approve, receive and forward to the City Auditor for payment the following warrant:
\$35,127.91

Motion Passed

Mayor Holaday absent for vote

Steve Cole absent for vote

On a motion by Cheryl Sweeney and seconded by Nick deKanter it was

VOTED: To approve, receive and forward to the City Auditor for payment the following warrant:
\$273,996.26

Motion Passed

Mayor Holaday absent for vote

Steve Cole absent for vote

Minutes

On a motion by Stephanie Weaver and seconded by Nick deKanter it was

VOTED: To approve, receive and file the Newburyport School Committee meeting minutes of Tuesday, September 19, 2011.

Motion Passed

Mayor Holaday absent for vote

Steve Cole absent for vote

NHS STUDENT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE REPORT:

School Committee Student Advisor Alex Haley reported on recent activities at Newburyport High School.

- Thursday was a half day
- On the 12th a Club Fair will be held in room 118 to give students the opportunity to receive information about the various clubs and to sign up if interested.
- On the 22nd a Craft Fair will be held sponsored by the Junior Class
- Color Day preparations are in full swing by the classes, with the exception of the Freshman Class that still does not have an advisor.

Discussion:

Dan Koen inquired as to why the Freshman Class does not have an advisor, and stated that the same situation happened last year. Superintendent Dr. Kerble stated he would look into this.

KINDERGARTEN AD HOC RECOMMENDATIONS UPDATE:

Brown School Principal Amy Sullivan, Director of Special Education Karen Brann and School Committee member Cheryl Sweeney gave an updated report of the Kindergarten Ad Hoc Committee. Last fall the Superintendent convened a Kindergarten Ad Hoc Committee to review the Newburyport kindergarten program. A report was presented at the January 18th meeting. There has been a lot of work accomplished since the January 18 meeting.

Initial Recommendations

- Full Day, district-funded Kindergarten
- Common Planning for teachers
- High level of student independence
- Quick transitions
- Direct, highly-structured phonics instruction
- Transition planning
- Inclusionary practices
- Frequent Assessment and Data Collection
- Curricular consistency between classrooms
- Purposeful play
- Full-time Kindergarten Assistants

What Were Our Next Steps

- Compare site based observations with practices and procedures at the Brown School.
- Look internally to develop our own findings at the Brown – What is Great? What could be Greater?
- Make final recommendations to the Superintendent and School Committee.

Recommendations Already Implemented

Frequent Assessment and Data Collection

- DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Early Literacy Skills) testing implemented this fall
- Looking at student work has become a regular component of staff meetings and in-service days.
- Math GMADE testing was implemented last year.
- Kindergarten screening took place in the spring and re-screening of students who were eligible took place in September.

Direct-Highly Structured Phonics Instruction

- Professional Development on phonemic awareness was provided by the literacy coach to all Kindergarten teachers over an 8-week period last spring.
- A pacing guide to teach Fountas and Pinnell Phonics Lessons was developed this fall.

Inclusionary Practices

- Title I and small group instruction began in October this year (last year it was February)

- Interventions were made available to struggling students: LLI (leveled literacy instruction) was offered during school, before school, and as a summer program. Earobics and Lexia-computer based programs are used with students.

High Level of Student Independence

- The Daily 5 is used to foster literacy independence.
- Improved curriculum consistency between classrooms.
- The entire Kindergarten staff went to a Daily 5 conference in July
- New Literacy centers have been instituted this fall:
 - Read to Self - Read to Someone
 - Work on Writing -Listen to Reading
 - Word Work

Other Initiatives Implemented This Year

- Curricular Consistency Between Classrooms
- Investigations implemented – 1st full year
- Math curriculum maps completed
- Common core standards alignment

Long Term Recommendations (1 year from now and beyond)

- Full-Day District Funded Kindergarten
- Common Planning time for teachers
- Change school hours (arrival/dismissal times) to align with Bresnahan beginning September, 2012
- Transition Planning
- Full-time Kindergarten Assistants
- Continue alignment with common core standards
- Continue to research preschool models
- More collaborative work to strengthen core curriculum
- Implement more opportunities for interventions and differentiated instruction
- Build community partnerships with early childhood programs and the Newburyport Mothers' Club

A video of “Daily 5” was presented for the committee showing the progress made with kindergarten students in the area of enthusiasm of reading. Principal Amy Sullivan spoke of how these young students have been introduced to the pleasures of reading and how they have embraced quiet reading time.

Discussion:

Stephanie Weaver stated it was amazing how in such a short time there is so many things put into action; and that watching the kids in the video was great. Principal Sullivan said she is proud of the teachers – the staff worked very hard.

Cheryl Sweeney stated the teachers really took this on – it is a tremendous cultural change – it speaks well for staff development.

Nick deKanter inquired as to the difference between ½ day and full day program. Principal Sullivan said the full day program is best as it has more time on learning.

Cheryl Sweeney stated there is a waiting list for the full day program.

Karen Brann stated many schools in the area are offering a full day program.

Superintendent Dr. Kerble thanked Principal Sullivan, Director of Special Education Karen Brann and School Committee member Cheryl Sweeney, and all those involved who have brought such dedication to this program.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mr. Zab Warren

CONCERN: He stated he enjoyed the video presentation as it presented

excellent information.

Dr. Ralph Orlando **CONCERN:** We need to start talking about important issues now. The 6:30 PM agenda needs to be looked into.

Judith Kennedy **CONCERN:** She tried to cast some insight as to why the Freshman class is left wanting an adviser.

MSBA UPDATES:

Superintendent Dr. Kerble called the attention of the Committee to the site visitation agenda in their packets. He spoke of the recent visits. Proposals are due this Thursday, October 6 at noon.

October 6 – School Building Committee Meeting

October 11, 12 – public interviews with architects at City Hall – 6 PM

Discussion:

Nick deKanter stated this is an exciting time working with the building committee/community. There was a meeting yesterday – 80 or so people attended wanting to get involved. There was a wonderful feeling of community stepping up and coordinating our efforts.

There is a new website www.newbres.org

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

- Superintendent Dr. Kerble thanked Assistant Superintendent Deirdre Farrell for her yeoman's work in moving this forward.
- Nominations for the Lower Field – there were 90 responses – he will reconvene the sub-committee – we will come forward with a recommendation by the first week in November.
- He attended the Open House at Bresnahan and NHS – he was pleased by the high level of energy by staff and parents.
- Leadership Retreat – a team building leadership retreat was held at the home of Art Currier.
- MCAS results will be presented by Assistant Superintendent Angela Bik on October 17
- X2 Portal – they are working out the last few kinks and once these are worked out we will have a regular means of communication.

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENTS REPORT:

Assistant Superintendent Deirdre Farrell said that the October 1st Enrollment is 2,371 – 125 of these are School Choice. Enrollment is up 91 from last year.

Bresnahan – up 27 Molin – down 13 High School – up 22

Brown – up 9 Middle School – up 45

Discussion:

Bruce Menin inquired as to how many choice students were in the system last year. Assistant Superintendent Farrell said 120 – 16 of which graduated.

(Steve Cole arrived at 8:07 PM)

MEETING ASSESSMENT:

NEF rescheduled Music Fest at the Spencer Pierce Little Farm, October 23, Sunday – all proceeds to benefit the campaign

NEF – Third annual NEF Open was on Monday, September 26 at Ipswich

Light House Auction – Saturday, November 14 – Masonic Hall – volunteers are needed

ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion by Steve Cole and seconded by Dan Koen it was

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 8:09 PM.

Motion Passed

Mayor Holaday absent for vote