
Newburyport School Committee Policy Subcommittee Meeting

Date: 21Dec2007

Time: 12pm

Location: Superintendent's Conference Room

Attendees Gordon Bechtel
Mark Wright
Andrea Jones
Kevin Lyons
John Delaines
Mike Parent

Please bring: •

Topics

Num	Topic	Responsible
1.	Gender equity in Newburyport's Athletic Program	Kevin Lyons, John Delaines, Mike Parent
2.	SC Meeting policy discussion	All
3.	Academic benchmark discussion	All
4.	Superintendent Incentives	All

Gender Equity in NPSD Athletic Programs

The gender equity issue in Newburyport's athletic programs has been brought into focus during the last several months by two events. First, the acceptance by the School Committee late in FY07 of Booster Club funds for assistant coach salaries, all of which were for boys sports. Second, a recent request by the NHS baseball coach to raise funds for a new assistant coach. Both of these events raise the question of gender equity, especially in athletic fund raising.

Dr. Lyons, John Delaines (Athletic Director) and Mike Parent (NHS Principal) led a discussion on this issue. They have contacted Dick Baker at the MIAA to get his input. Dick reported that the MIAA does all it can to promote women in athletics, including promotion of leadership among women in athletics, and encouraging more female role models, particularly as coaches. The MIAA does not, however, directly promote equity. Gender equity is strictly a Title 9 issue.

Title 9 focuses on resources spent on boys vs. girls. A variety of metrics can be used to measure equity, including number of scholarships, number of teams, number of participants, etc. Title 9 applies to public schools, as well as colleges and universities.

Dr. Lyons clearly stated that one critical area for improvement in Newburyport is our mechanism for athletic fundraising. Currently individual team coaches raise funds for particular positions on their specific teams. The Booster Club helps, but it is the coaches who actually raise funds. Dr. Lyons and John Delaines have talked to several other districts. Many of them have a much more active Booster Club. In these communities, the Booster Club raises the money, gifts it to the school district, and the School Committee decides how to spend the money. This process results in much more control over the equitable distribution of funds. Mike and John are members of Newburyport's Booster Club, and have recently tried to rebuild and reinvigorate the Club. They have had little success, as there is little parent interest in a general Booster Club. As Andrea Jones pointed out, most parents are much more interested in their student's particular team, rather than a general-purpose Booster Club.

Mike Parent had an active Booster Club in his previous school district. They held a central sports banquet and did all the trophies. Even though it was a "general purpose" Booster Club, it had a lot of parent participation because of the key role it played with all teams.

Gordon Bechtel asked what vision Mike and John have for Athletics in the long-term. They agreed this is a good question and that Dr. Lyons should take this up as part of his vision work.

Regarding funding of athletics, Andrea wondered if we should fully fund our athletic program via fees. Several in the group noted that Swampscott completely canceled athletics last year. This turned out to be a disaster.

John Delaines provided a handout showing several statistics on boys vs. girls for Newburyport's athletic programs. The following table summarizes his information. When discussing the data, John noted that no one had signed up for winter cheerleading. This was why no coach is shown in the table. He suggested that another girls winter sport might be offered, such as hockey.

Gordon Bechtel asked how Dr. Lyons, John Delaines, and Mike Parent how they plan to proceed. They will be calling several other school districts to understand their approach to athletics, in the following areas:

- Fund raising
- Whether or not they have an asst. baseball coach
- What their participation rates/teams/coaches/programs are

Kevin also committed to including an Athletics component as part of his work on the NPSD vision.

School Committee Meeting Policy

The group discussed how best to include the School Committee's recent conversations on meeting quality into the School Committee policies. Gordon Bechtel refreshed everyone with the basics of those conversations. The primary points were:

- SC meetings serve three major purposes
 - A venue for public deliberation on Newburyport education issues
 - A venue for the public to engage the SC on education issues
 - Be the “heart” of the SC's communications with the public
- The SC needs to implement the following strategies to make sure its meetings meet these goals:
 - Prepare properly for the meetings
 - Keep meetings interesting
 - Commit to and enforce the meeting schedule
 - Follow-up on all items identified during the meeting
 - Have a balanced and rule-based public comment period

The group noted that the vice-chair plays a key role in implementing these five strategies. They insure that everyone is properly prepared, that meetings are interesting, that the schedule is kept, that items are followed up, and that public comment is balanced and consistent. As such, the group felt that writing a bunch of specific rules regarding meeting operation would not be prudent. Specific rules might work at the time they're written, but probably would be too inflexible to meet the needs of future School Committees. Instead, the group felt that a well written job description for the vice-chair, and subcommittee vice-chairs would be the best approach. Then those individuals could meet the goals in their job description as they see fit. This is a much more flexible and better long-term solution.

<bechtel> Investigate what job descriptions currently exist in our policy manuals, and draft job descriptions for the vice-chair and subcommittee chairs.

Academic and Resource Benchmark Components

The discussion moved on to the academic and resource components of our Benchmark. Dr. Lyons presented a list of metrics he jotted down as possibilities. He noted that his list is very rough and only meant as a suggestion. The group went through the list and categorized the metrics into “academic” and “resource” categories. The following table shows the results.

<i>Performance Benchmarks</i>	<i>Resource Benchmarks</i>
<u>Student Outcomes</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Graduation rate	Class size
Drop-out rate	Foreign Languages offered at each grade level
% of graduates meeting MCAS competency	MCAS support programs (personnel and funding)
MCAS Rankings w Comparative School Districts	# of guidance counselors/ratio
AYP all grades and district	# of administrators per school/school population
MCAS A&P percentages for each test	# of curriculum administrators or teacher coordinators assigned to curriculum and instruction coordination
# H.S. students successfully completing AP course	# reading specialists by level
AP exam scores	# math specialists by level
SAT/ACT participation	# Technology support personnel (licensed instructional personnel)
SAT/ACT scores	School and C/O support staffing (clerical)
PLAN (sophomores)	# Licensed library teachers
PSAT scores	# Library paraprofessionals
College acceptances	# H.S. Academic electives
# of graduates attending 4-year colleges	
# of students accepted to selective colleges	<u>Program</u>
# Competitive academic teams	Teacher tuition reimbursement
Middle School math program and % 9th graders successfully completing geometry	Summer school for H.S. students
Percentage of 8th grade applicants accepted by Whittier VoTec	Prof Dev. Budget (non-salary, not teacher tuition or conferences)
Performance of sub groups on MCAS	Teacher conference funding
Youth risk behavior outcomes	Teacher salaries
Asset Survey outcomes	Administrator salaries
<u>Program Benchmarks</u>	Currency of textbooks, published programs
H.S. advanced placement courses offered	# Co-curricula clubs/activities
H.S. graduation requirements/MASS CORE delta	# Advanced elective courses (H.S)
Degree of full inclusion (students with disabilities)	# Elementary leveled readers/population
Evidence of differentiation of instruction and assessment in curriculum documents and in practice	Adequacy of facilities to support programs
Adequacy of curriculum documents including currency, fidelity, and alignment (existence and stage of development of guaranteed and viable curriculum including standards, strategies, and common assessments)	Contractual teacher time for curriculum and instruction work

<i>Performance Benchmarks</i>	<i>Resource Benchmarks</i>
Formative assessments embedded in curriculum 21st Century learning objectives embedded through curriculum	

Superintendent Incentives

The group (Gordon Bechtel, Mark Wright, Andrea Jones) noted that the School Committee has a contractual obligation to write incentives for Dr. Lyons. From his contract:

- 11e. Performance Incentive: An amount up to \$2,500 may be provided in the second and third year of the contract if criterion-based levels of performance have been achieved. These criterion-based levels will be determined by the Committee in its discretion through the prior year's evaluation process. Performance incentives, if given, will be added to the Superintendent's base salary.

The group felt that Dr. Lyons' performance incentives should be based on going above and beyond his expected duties as Superintendent. With that premise in mind, the group whittled down the following lists as noted. These lists were gathered from two primary sources: Dr. Lyons and Steve Cole's notes from Dr. Lyons' evaluation. The group reviewed the suggested list of incentives to come up with the following:

- Securing foundation and private support of 100K+ to enable comprehensive literacy initiative
- Leading District through very difficult transition and financial crisis—sustain morale and productivity, union relations management
- Secure funding and establish a pilot program in “assessment technologies” to seed tech leveraged processes supporting frequent assessments to guide instruction
- Publish 6 e-letters informing community about critical issues and good things happening in the school system
- Expand public awareness of the new direction for an Inclusion Model in the District.
- Be a key leader in reformation of NEBC mission and bring into alignment with evolving District vision