

January 11, 2023

RE: Academic Principles Advisory Committee

Dear Newton School Committee Members,

Newton Public Schools (NPS) has long held teachers and students to high standards with outstanding results, but in the last several years NPS has shifted away from a focus on academic excellence. Recognizing the change, only 31% of NPS parents/guardians believed that the district is heading in the right direction in a November 2022 NPS survey.

With the superintendent search underway, NPS is at a critical moment, and we, the undersigned registered voters of Newton, Massachusetts, qualified to vote at the next general election or special election, hereby petition the Newton School Committee, pursuant to the Charter of the City of Newton, section 10-2, to create an Academic Principles Advisory Committee (the "Advisory Committee") to serve the citizens of this City regarding establishment of core principles for NPS.

The Advisory Committee will review and recommend revisions to the [systemwide goals](#), [NPS Mission Statement](#) and any other documents guiding development and implementation of NPS curriculum, classroom instruction, and teacher professional development, and will advise on the "Portrait of a Graduate" if that process continues.

The Advisory Committee shall be composed of parents of current NPS students (who shall constitute a majority of the Advisory Committee), NPS teachers and members of the community at large. Other than NPS teacher members, no Advisory Committee members shall be otherwise affiliated with NPS (other than as parents of current students or members or officers of school PTOs.) At least 5 members of the Advisory Committee shall be signatories of this petition. Recommendation, revisions and advice of the Advisory Committee will not be binding on NPS or the School Committee, provided that the School Committee shall hold an open vote on all recommendations of the Advisory Committee and provide a written response to any of the Advisory Committee's recommendations that the School Committee rejects.

In addition, we ask that the School Committee expedite review, approval and implementation of the Advisory Committee so any recommended changes to NPS documents are updated promptly and the School Committee ensures that the incoming superintendent understands and is able to champion NPS' core values.