



RUTHANNE FULLER– EX OFFICIO	
Newton School Committee Members	
WARD	
I	Rajeev Parlikar
II	Christopher Brezski
III	Anping Shen
IV	Tamika Olszewski- Chair
V	Emily Prenner
VI	Paul Levy
VII	Kathy Shields -Vice Chair
VIII	Cove Davis

**NEWTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING DRAFT Minutes**

**Date:** November 6, 2023

**Location:** School Committee Meeting

**Time:** **5:30 pm Executive Session**(vote in open session in rm., 210 to convene in executive session in rm 304)  
**6:30 pm** SC re-convened in rm. 210 at the Education Center 100 Walnut St and via [ZOOM](#)

**Members: (I/R):** Dr. Nolin (I), Parlikar (I), Brezski (I), Shen (I), Olszewski (I), Prenner (R), Levy (R), Shields (I), Davis (R), Mayor (I)

**Students Remote (I/ R):** **NSHS:** Maxwell Harthorne (I), **NNHS:** ( )

**Staff (I/R):** **Toby Romer ( R)** Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education; **Ayesha Farag (I)**, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education, **Renee McCall ( R)**, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching & Learning, **Liam Hurley (I)**, Assistant Superintendent/Chief Financial, and Administrative Officer, **Casey Ngo Miller (I)**, Assistant Superintendent for Special Education/Student Services, **Joany Santa ( R)** Director Human Resources; **Jill Grady ( R )** General Counsel; **Steven Rattendi (I)**, Director of IT and Library Services; **Dr. Katy Hogue (I)** Chief of Data and Research, **Stephanie Gilman ( R )**, Director of Planning, Project Management and Sustainability; **Sean Mannion (R)**, Director of Finance; **Alyssa Baringer ( R)**, Senior Budget Analyst; **Awino Odhiambo ( R)**, Budget Analyst **Amy Mistrot ( R )** Julie McDonough, Communications Director (ab ), **Kathy Lopes, ( R)** DEI Director

**Others (I/R):** **Kathleen Browning (I)**, NECP Director, **Karen Manning and Theresa Fitzpatrick (I)**, NSF Co-Presidents, **Dr. Damian Bebell ( R)**, Boston College, Educational Researcher

Chair Olszewski convened a regular School Committee meeting at 6:38 pm. She welcomed the public, and then opened the meeting to Public Comment.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- 1) Ryan Normandin – NPS Staff – Mayor states schools are the most important – 10-15 classroom teachers left last year, unfulfilled aide positions. 30+ students, no desks. Systematic budget crisis’ = mayor. Mayor dismantling the jewel of the city – the NPS’
- 2) Ron and Sue Cohen – NPS staff and residents– Outside council for negotiations = 2-3 school social workers salaries. Question not answered regarding hiring school social workers.
- 3) Deborah Han – NPS and resident. Quoted Maya Angelou – “How you feel” overview of her participation in NPS as both parent & educator. One of thousands of educators who teach your children. Lack of a living wage, meager COLA. Undervalued, under appreciated.

The Chair thanked everyone for their perspectives.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

The Chair asked if anyone wanted to remove an item from the Consent Agenda which includes: Policies BDFA-E, BDFA-E-1, BSFAE-2, BDFA-E-3, CHA/CHC and CL, International Exchange Trips, and 10-23-23 Minutes which were received and placed on file.

The Chair then called for a vote on the consent agenda items:

1. Policies BDFA-E, BDFA-E-1, BSFAE-2, BDFA-E-3, CHA/CHC and CL
2. International Exchange Trips
3. 10-123-23 Minutes

Motion: Shields                      2<sup>nd</sup>: Parlikar

Roll Call Vote

Ward 1	Y	Ward 4	Y	Ward 7	Y
Ward 2	Y	Ward 5	Y	Ward 8	Y
Ward 3	Y	Ward 6	Y	Mayor	Y

Motion passes 9 (yes) 0 (no) 0 (abstain) 0 (absent)

**SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE –**

1. Superintendent Nolin's **Update** was received and placed on file.  
Dr. Nolin acknowledged Samantha Genier, FA Day science teacher who was awarded the Massachusetts Association of Science Teachers (MAST) County Teacher of the Year and NNHS which was honored with the 2023 District 7 Sportsmanship Award from MIAA! She also reported on the official opening of the NSHS turf field, permanent lights at NNHS, 12 openings. 1 ASL Teacher needed. 4 anticipated maternity leave, 5 part-time .4/.2 or less, increases to the ELL program, SLIFE students, the recent Extended Administrative Council meeting, the creation of the North & South High School Student Superintendent and Communication Advisory Group (15 NN & NS students) and an update on the Countryside building project.

Brief questions, answers and comments followed.

**BUSINESS AGENDA**

**1. Negotiations Update -**

The Chair gave a brief negotiations update. Continue to meet with the state appointed mediator, productive sessions. October 23 provided detailed data, some details regarding the difference in the SC and NTA positions and can be found on the SC negotiations tab.

Question, answers and comments followed.

**2. Newton Schools Foundation (NSF) Update and donation**

Karen Manning and Theresa Fitzpatrick, NSF Co-Presidents presented their yearly update which was received and placed on file. They gave a brief overview of how last year's donation of \$234,000 was distributed and announced their donation of \$260,00 for this year which includes \$55,000 to support the Calculus Project and \$205,000 earmarked for fall and spring grants.

The Chair asked for a motion to accept the \$260,000 NSF Donation

Motion: Shen                      2<sup>nd</sup>: Prenner

Roll Call Vote

Ward 1	Y	Ward 4	Y	Ward 7	Y
Ward 2	Y	Ward 5	Y	Ward 8	Y
Ward 3	Y	Ward 6	Y	Mayor	Y

Motion passes 9 (yes) 0 (no) 0 (abstain) 0 (absent)

**3. Class Size Report– received and placed on file.**

Dr. Katy Hogue gave an overview of the Class Size Report data as of October, 2023.

Elementary average class sizes range from 16.3 in kindergarten to 20.8 in grade 5 with no class size of 25 or higher. Overall elementary class sizes across schools ranger from 17.9 to 20.4 students.

Middle School average team size is 89, with the largest team at Brown with 99 students and the smallest in grade 6 at Bigelow with 66 students. She also reported on the individual class sizes by subject. 21.4 average lass size.

High School The majority of classes at the high schools fall into a range of 20-30 students per class across subjects. At both high schools, the highest average class sizes are in History, followed by Math. She also reported on the percentage classes with 25 or more students by subject. Tend to be honors or ACP level. 19.6 to 23.6 average class size.

Submitted questions – optimum class size?

- Research shows that less than 8 and greater than 25 not optimal.

Questions, answers and discussion followed.

- Review NSHS math class sizes – none are over 35, but clearly there are too many that are over 25.
- Student perspective – agree that the larger math classes are problematic.
- A median might be more helpful than tan average.
- How many sections would we have opened w/o budget constraints?
  - 13 – 15 FTE teachers per school gone over the years, not just offering electives to offset
- Smallest classes at CP level, medium size ACP, largest at honors level

**4. Boston College Research Study on Instructional Technology - received and placed on file.**

Dr. Damian Bebell presented an overview of past collaboration with NPS and an introduction to the 2023/2024 Research Collaboration that will apply new technologies to advance educational research, assessment, and evaluation; design, conduct, and share studies on the use and impacts of educational technology and help schools make better use of research tools and data to help answer their own question.

He presented an overview of the collaboration timeline:

Phase 1 – Fall 2023 (Collaborative development of staff/student surveys)

Phase 2 – Winter/Early Spring 2024 (Data Collection via short anonymous surveys)

Phase 3 – Late Spring 2024 (Data Dashboards and Results)

Brief questions, answers and comments followed

- Disagree with early childhood use of technology
  - Research methodology = surveys re: teachers “feelings” vs. actual SEL assessments
  - Correlate survey feelings to academic assessments
- Now that we are flush with technology what are we doing with it? Need to get a baseline.
- Possible hindrance to the timeline – the negotiations – can you be flexible

**5. Newton Early Childhood Program (NECP) Update and FY25 NECP Fee Proposal – received and placed on file.**

Dr. Nolin gave a brief background regarding the legal obligation of special education for preschoolers.

Casey Ngo-Miller, Liam Hurley Kathleen Browning, Director of NECP presented an overview of NECP including its history, philosophy, enrollment information, the special education referral process, enrollment data, future planning, the effects of COVID (SEL), community support, and the need for more staffing. She ended with the announcement that NECP has a mascot – the Narwhal and the receipt of one of 10 Communication Boards awarded by the American Speech Language Hearing Association (ASHA)!

Next Liam Hurley and Kathleen Browning presented an overview of NECP tuition rates over the years, comparisons to other districts, the increased needs of the program and proposed a 5% increase.

Brief questions, answers and comments followed.

- Aims and goals – this is not a self-funding program. Small off-setting fee. Never intended to offset full cost of this mandated program.
- 59/41 % ration by law.
- Waiting list?

**6. Staffing Additions and Updates – received and placed on file**

Casey Ngo-Miller and Liam Hurley presented the rationale for adjustments to the FY24 Staffing Budget, which totals \$423,100 and includes FTES totaling 7.51, for a Kindergarten aide, grade 3 teacher, SEL Coach, Social Worker, BCBA, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Pathologist, NECP Classroom (various positions) and restoration of NN/NS stipends for freshmen sports.

Brief questions, answers and comments followed.

**7. FY24 Fiscal and Operational Report – received and placed on file.**

Liam Hurley, and his team: Sean Mannion, Alyssa Baringer and Amy Mistrot, presented an overview of the first FY24 Fiscal and Ops report which included highlights from the current forecast. Based on the current forecast, Mr. Hurley projects NPS will end the year with a modest positive balance of \$385,619.

Brief questions, answers, comments followed.

The Chair announced that the Committee had concluded the posted business for tonight. The next meeting is November 20, 2023 at 6:30.

Adjourned at 9:13 pm

Lisa Mazzola

School Committee Secretary

Date: 11/6/23