



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: December 4, 2023

Location: School Committee Meeting

Time: **6:30 pm** The School Committee convened in rm. 210 at the Education Center 100 Walnut St and [via ZOOM](#) Dr. Nolin (I), Parlikar (I), Brezski (I), Shen (I), Olszewski (R), Prenner (I), Levy (R), Shields (I), Davis (R late – 7:19),

Members: (I/R): Mayor (I)

Students Remote (I/ R): **NSHS: Max Harthorn(I), NNHS: ()**

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

Others (I/R): **Lori Zinner, Helen Makadia and Michelle Tsay (I)** PTO Council Representatives

Vice-Chair Shields convened a regular School Committee meeting at 6:30 pm and called for Public Comment.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- 1) Jacquelyn Lykken – Pond Ave. Support for NTA, impressed with the educators. Worried about reduction in staff. Should focus on the educators. Especially because all that was lost during COVID – ask city leadership to fully fund NTA.
- 2) Allie Franke – 21 Mosman St. – Resident and teacher in another district. Thanked all the members. Fight for Horace Mann, staffing, etc. Read a letter she sent to the Mayor – free the cash and settle the contract – now. Neighbors’ comments read.
- 3) Cheryl Wermer – parent – Ask the SC and Mayor to settle the contract. Followed negotiations closely, SC controlled the narrative and was misleading. Aggressive effort – salary charts. Retain the teachers we have.
- 4) Lena Zucerwise – Newton schools should be fully and immediately funded. Special education students – expertise of aides/para professionals, most underpaid and lost in broader negotiations.
- 5) Chris Alberg –269 Forest Hill St. JP - NPS staff – SC bio lists experiences with NPS committees that work with teachers – what happened – work against instead of with. Mayor – every 3 years –yet it’s always a surprise. Why go through this charade every three years.

The Vice -Chair thanked everyone for their perspectives.

CONSENT AGENDA:

The Chair asked if anyone wanted to remove an item from the Consent Agenda which includes: 11-20-23 Regular Meeting and 11-20-23 Caucus Minutes, Policies: **GA** (Personnel Policy Goals), **GCQD** (Resignation of Professional Staff Member), **GCQE** (Retirement of Professional Staff Members) **GDQC** (Retirement of Non-Professional Staff Member), **GDQD** (Suspension/Dismissal of Non-Professional Staff Member), **LBC** (Relations with Non-Public Schools) and International/Out-of-State Field Trips which were received and placed on file.

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

1. 11-20-23 Meeting and 11-20-23 Caucus Minutes
2. Policies GA, GCQD, GCQE, GDQC, GDQD and LBC
3. Field Trips

Motion: Parlikar 2nd: Shen
Roll Call Vote
Ward 1 Y Ward 4 Y Ward 7 Y
Ward 2 Y Ward 5 Y Ward 8 ab
Ward 3 Y Ward 6 Y Mayor Y

Motion passes 8 (yes) 0 (no) 0 (abstain) 1 (absent)

SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE – Dr. Nolin stated that additional information requested at the last meeting will be presented at the next meeting.

1. Superintendent Nolin's **Update** was received and placed on file. She reported on:

- Academics at the elementary schools
- Conferences and sharing progress
- EI Curriculum - Integrity Walks
- Early Literacy Screening Results
 - Aspen has been out for the last three days – not a Newton issue – Aspen issue, has been resolved. Caution- 1st time Newton has done this type of Literacy Screening.
- Athletics – NNHS Girls Volleyball Championship
- Human Resources and the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)
 - NPS awarded a Teacher Diversification Grant
- Professional Learning and Teaming
 - METCO Directors
 - Literacy and the Teaching of History
 - Newton is the largest METCO program in the state
 - Community Forum on Dec 6th at NSHS
- Technology and Facilities Upgrades
 - Shout out to the IT department – They finished total upgrade at Underwood

Questions, answers and comments followed.

BUSINESS AGENDA

1. **Negotiations Update** –

The Vice-Chair, Kathy Shields gave a brief negotiations update.

2 Hour negotiation session NPS increased COLA for all units in addition, Unit C agreed to an NTA proposal – drops 2 full steps off the scale. Another NPS proposal is to offer a higher COLA to the lowest members on the scale.

- Corrected Misinformation – staff children enrollment not in jeopardy – modest changes proposed.
- On Dec 1st increased all A and B annual step avg 4% C & D avg 6%
- Making corrections and improvements re: Weston's salaries
- Meeting again on December 18

Question, answers and comments followed.

2. **District (Systemwide) Goals Update – received and placed on file.**

Vice Chair Shields asked Dr. Nolin and her team to present the Goals Update. Dr. Nolin and her Central Staff team reported on district goals that were completed, partially completed or delayed (due to contract negotiations or other unforeseen circumstances). She covered:

- **Goal 1: Foster Joyful and Supportive Learning Environments**
 - Strategic Objectives 1.1 – 1.5
 - Success Measures
- **Goal 2: Provide Culturally Responsive, High Quality, Rigorous Instruction for All**
 - Strategic Objectives 2.1 – 2.7
 - Success Measures
- **Goal 3: Ensure Equitable Access to Effective Educators**
 - Strategic Objectives 3.1 – 3.3
 - Success measures
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➤ **Goal 4: Optimize District Planning and Budgeting Ecosystem**

- Strategic Objectives 4.1 – 4.9
- Success Measures

In addition, Dr. Nolin reported on areas chosen by the School Committee in regards to the Superintendent's Evaluation as well as areas she, herself chose.

- **School Committee:** Instructional Leadership, Family and Community Engagement, Management and Operations, and Professional Culture.
- **Dr. Nolin:** Student Learning Goal, Professional Practice Goal.

Question, answers and comments followed.

- Elaborate on District plan – Budget – what's holding us up
- History classes are not discussing recent world events
- Expand on the Centralized Communication Portal
- Dr. Hogue's memo – outside vendor (Creation of Data Dashboards)
- Casey Ng-Miller's Memo MTSS
- Develop anti-ableism

3. Dr. Joany Santa – Human Resources Entry Plan– received and placed on file

Dr. Nolin said she's proud of the work Dr. Santa's doing. Dr. Santa then reviewed key areas of her HR Entry Plan which included, stating, "you have your plans, and then you have what happens.":

- High priority items
 - Recruitment, retention, support, onboarding, licensure, and website development.
 - Monitoring /Follow-Up/Compliance
 - Chart Progress: 30 day/mid-way 60 day/ongoing 90+

Dr. Nolin highlighted that Dr. Santa increased the substitute pool by 58%!

Question, answers and comments followed.

- Historically NPS retention rate was 90% what is it now?
- Does HR still do exit interviews?

Dr. Nolin interjected that without that exit interview we can't know if there is a problem.

- Setting the context might be helpful – i.e. 30 openings in a district this size not that drastic
- NPS in a competition for talent
- Make sure we're doing a good job tracking retention
- Support for staff re: Employee Assistance Plan – caseloads really high – are we able to provide support
- Publicly thank Dr. Santa, have seen firsthand how in-depth her knowledge is and laser focused. Deliberate and thoughtful approach to HR strategies
- The quality and efficacy we provide our students depends on the people we hire and retain and your individualized approach to staffing is welcome.
- Success in increasing the substitute pool/time and attendance
- What will it look like in the future at the HS

Dr. Nolin said there are 30 teachers out per day on average (teaching staff= 193 teachers at NN and 158 teachers at NS)

4. PTO Equity Spending Committee Report -received and place on file

PTO Council Reps Lori Zinner, Helen Makadia and Michelle Tsay presented their FY23 Update from the PTOC which includes SC member Rajeev Parlikar and NPS staff Assistant Superintendents Dr. Renee McCall and Ayesha Farag, IT Director Mr. Steven Rattendi, Principal Dr. Diana Beck and Principal Andrea Vargas.

The update includes FY23 Spending Conclusions, spending on Curriculum Related Items, Curriculum Support, and reviews from Elementary, Middle and High School Spending. Two schools exceeded the \$40 per pupil Equity Cap. They also request the School Committee to revise the Equity Policy.

Mr. Parlikar, the SC representative on this committee, stated that the overarching goal is to have similar experiences at all of the schools.

- The SC as a group had an agreement that this group should concentrate on the PTO's, narrowing the scope of this in the policy is reasonable.

Dr. Nolin said this business of what fundraising is happening when is not the responsibility of the PTO's NPS has to get a handle on it. Publish what are the fundraisers happening in the schools.

- What policy are you envisioning?
- What prevents schools from spending all of their cap
- These are independent organizations – we can't tell them how to spend their money. Classroom standards concept is interesting. Brought it up last year, there are parts of this that worries him, the language of the guidelines with these private 501C organizations. Prescribing what they can and cannot do – i.e. punishment for exceeding the guideline. We have the right to accept or not accept donations from any organization Prefer framing this as an acceptance guideline and not a spending guideline. Think we can simplify this process.
- PTO's have questions about what they can and cannot spend PTO money on was the genesis of this
- PTO dollars funnel into various student experiences. Rather be over prescriptive, and err on the side of more, detailed process.
- Policy subcommittee will have to review KCDE and they'll get back to them.

Question, answers and comments followed.

5. Budget Guidelines – received and placed on file

School Committee members Emily Prenner and Rajeev Parlikar outlined the Budget process and requested that SC members submit suggestions on major items they believe should be included in a unified document for review, consideration and vote by the entire School Committee. The unified document was distributed to the Committee and presented at the meeting

- D. Nolin's' Entry Plan will be a key to the Budget process
- Class Sizes
- Breadth of programming
- Educational Programming and Professional Development
- Student Services/Mental Health Supports
- Operational Infrastructure

They stated that this was a process perspective for tonight– they do not want to members to edit the document. If people have major changes they are to let Emily and Rajeev know and they will incorporate feedback into the document and then it will be voted on at the December 20 meeting.

Question, answers and comments followed.

The Chair announced that the Committee had concluded the posted business for tonight. The next meeting is December 18, 2023 at 6:30.

Adjourned at ___9:07___ pm

Lisa Mazzola

School Committee Secretary

Date: 12/11/23