



Newton School Committee Members

WARD

I	Rajeev Parlikar
II	Christopher Brezski- Chair
III	Anping Shen
IV	Tamika Olszewski
V	Emily Prenner -Vice Chair
VI	Paul Levy
VII	Amy Davenport
VIII	Barry Greenstein

RUTHANNE FULLER– EX OFFICIO

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING DRAFT Minutes

Date: February 8, 2024

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](#)

Members: (I/R): Dr. Nolin (I), Parlikar (I), Brezski (I), Shen (I), Olszewski (I), Prenner (I), Levy (R), Davenport (I), Greenstein (I), Mayor (I)

Students Remote (I/ R): **NSHS: Matthew Zeng (I), NNHS: (I)**

Staff (I/R): **Toby Romer (ab)** Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education; **Ayesha Farag (ab)**, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education, **Renee McCall (I)**, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching & Learning, **Liam Hurley (I)**, Assistant Superintendent/Chief Financial, and Administrative Officer, **Casey Ngo Miller (R)**, Assistant Superintendent for Special Education/Student Services, **Joany Santa (I)** Director Human Resources; **Jill Grady (I)** 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 (ab)**, Director of Finance; **Alyssa Baringer (ab)**, Senior Budget Analyst; **Awino Odhiambo (ab)**, Budget Analyst **Amy Mistrot (ab)**, Director of Business Operations, **Julie McDonough (ab)**, Communications Director, **Kathy Lopes (ab)**, DEI Director

Others (I/R):

Legend: (I) In Person (R) Remote (ab) Absent - Not on Agenda

Chair Brezski convened a regular School Committee meeting at 6:30 pm, welcomed everyone. He said he was happy for everyone to be back in person and called for Public Comment. There was none.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

SUPERINTENDENT UPDATE:

Dr. Nolin reported on \$1m grant the district was awarded. Thanks to the Mayor's investment made in our curricular materials we were able to receive this matching grant. She read numerous emails regarding use of time during February. Based on feedback received, April break is our snow day(s) safety days and the order in which they will be used are:

- Start w/Thursday as 1st day, Wednesday as the 2nd and Tuesday as the third. Only if we have snow days in the future.

Profile of A Graduate sessions: were held at NN and NS. It's not too late to volunteer to be on the committee. Dr. Nolin addressed the community. Her comments were transcribed through Closed Captioning and are linked [here](#).

Questions, answers and comments followed.

CONSENT AGENDA:

The Chair asked if anyone wanted to remove an item from the Consent Agenda which includes: 1-8-23 Regular Minutes, Out-of-State/International Field Trip(s), Car Donation to CTE, and Grant Award which were received and placed on file.

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

1. 1-8-23 Meeting Minutes
2. Out-of-State/International Field Trip (s)
3. Car Donation to CTE
4. Grant Award

The Chair asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Motion: Shen 2nd: Parlikar

No further discussion.

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 passed 9 (yes) 0 (no) 0 (abstain) 0 (absent)

BUSINESS AGENDA

1. Discussion and Vote to Approve Collective Bargaining and Return to Work agreements for NTA units, A, B, C, D, E covering 9/1/23- 8/31/24 and 9/1/24 – 8/31/27 which were received and placed on file.

The Chair informed the community that the School Committee voted in Executive Session on Saturday morning at 10:00 am to approve the contract. It's good practice to then take the vote again and vote in open session. The documents are available on-line.

Questions, comments and discussion followed.

➤ Community question were answered:

The Chair thanked his colleagues who were in the negotiations room for 14 days with him. He truly has a different level of respect for each and every one, and thank you all. He also echoed what Paul said regarding Kathy Shields

Tamika recognized the NPS team: Sean, Liam, Joany, Caitlin, Ayesha, Toby, Casey, Jill.

The Chair asked for a motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding with the NTA Units A, B, C, D and E.

Ms. Olszewski moved that the School Committee:

- a) Approve the NTA Proposed Memorandum of Understanding from February 2, 2024 at 7 PM covering the period from September 1, 2023 - August 31, 2024 and the period from September 1, 2024 to August 31, 2027 for the NTA Units A, B, C, D and E ; and
- b) Approve the Side Letters of Agreement Concerning Mental Health Supports and High School Class Sizes attached to the Memorandum of Understanding; and
- c) Authorize the Chair of the Committee to sign these agreements on behalf of the Committee.

Motion: Olszewski 2nd: Levy

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 passed 9 (yes) 0 (no) 0 (abstain) (absent)

Amy Davenport asked to recognize Lisa Mazzola, Carolyn Campo, Julie McDonough and the custodial staff.

Mayor Fuller thanked Chris for ably taking over the baton from Tamika and stepped in with grace, leadership, eye to settling this and getting the kids back in school with causing the least amount of harm and setting us up for the rest of this school year. She said he was a remarkable leader and he has the communities respect and gratitude.

The Chair asked for a motion to approve the Return to Work Agreement.

Ms. Olszewski moved that the Newton School Committee approve the Return to Work Agreement with the NTA, and authorize the Chair of the Committee to sign the Return to Work Agreement on behalf of the Committee.

Motion: Olszewski 2nd: Levy

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 passed 9 (yes) 0 (no) 0 (abstain) (absent)

The Chair thanked everyone again.

2. Discussion and Vote: FY25 Revised Calendar and Homework/Holiday policies – which was received and placed on file

At the last School Committee meeting Dr. Nolin presented her recommendation for the FY25 School Year Calendar, based on the work started by Interim Superintendent Kathy Smith and the Calendar Working Group (CWG) which includes no school for students on election day, November 5, and providing a full day of professional development on that date, as well as recognizing Lunar New Year as a no school holiday on January 29. As a result of the School Committees discussion, as well as a response from the union, Dr. Nolin presented her Calendar drafts #3 and #4.

Superintendent said the earlier drafts #1, and #2 no longer apply since the strike went on beyond the 9 days so those were eliminated. She also addressed the use of Good Friday for Franklin students only.

Dr. Nolin's recommendation is Calendar #3

- Adds two student days (182 vs. 180)
- No School on election day (November 5th)
- Start school after Labor Day

She explained that the new contract gives district the ability to start before Labor Day when Labor Day falls late i.e. on the 6th or 7th. It is not her recommendation that we start before Labor Day this year due to the number of days the district has to make up sue to the strike.

Chris – vote order of operations:

- Lunar New Year and Homework/Holiday Policies discuss and vote and then proceed from there.

Discussion followed regarding holidays.

The Chair called for a motion to approve Lunar New Year as a Holiday and approve companion policies IKB and JHA

Mr. Shen motioned that the Committee approve adding Lunar New Year as a no school holiday and adopting the revised IKB and JHA companion policies.

Motion: Shen 2nd: 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 passed 9 (yes) 0 (no) 0 (abstain) 0 (absent)

The Chair moved on to the FY25 Calendar recommendations

Mr. Levy moved to approve Calendar draft #3 in the memo from Superintendent Nolin

Motion: Levy 2nd: Shen

The Chair called for discussion before the vote. Discussion took place and then the Committee voted.

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 passed 9 (yes) 0 (no) 0 (abstain) 0 (absent)

3. High Level Enrollment Overview – which was received and placed on file

Dr. Nolin introduced Dr. Hogue and her report, explaining that McKibben will be presenting at an upcoming meeting. Dr. Katy Hogue presented a summary of her report which included answering questions asked by a committee member:

- 11,596 students slightly less than projected - Actual decline is 33 students more.
- 2023-2024 Variance from Projection = -0.3% district wide
 - Elementary = -1% Middle = +2% High -1%

She also reported on:

- “Cohort Survival Rates” (CSR), Five Year Projections by each level, Elementary, Middle and High, and future planning.
- CRS’s for 5 school years – illustrates a shift at 5-6 and 8-9.
- Kindergarten more difficult because we don’t have a cohort to use. We have to use previous year’s k data. Birthrate to Kindergarten ratio. Next years’ K class (2019 birth rate was low)

Dr. Nolin will be reaching out to private school families for additional info. Question, answers and comments followed.

The Chair thanked Dr. Hogue and called for the second discussion on School Choice.

4. Inter-District School Choice Program 2nd Discussion and presentations – which were received and placed on file.

Dr. Nolin will hold a School Committee workshop after the February 26 McKibben Report to discuss this in depth.

Assistant Superintendent/Chief Financial, and Administrative Officer Liam Hurley presented additional information on Massachusetts “School Choice” program including a Q & A document resulting from questions the Committee asked at the January 8, 2024 meeting, a Special Ed Tuition Calculation Sheet.

- 90 – 100% reimbursement for special ed services for students here through school choice.
- Tuition = \$5,000 per student
- Transportation not the responsibility of NPS

Dr. Nolin spoke to some concerns from the community, and the Committee

Question, answers and comments followed.

The Chair reminded everyone that they discuss this further at the workshop.

5. Updated Budget Calendar – received and placed on file.

Assistant Superintendent Hurley presented a revised Budget Calendar necessitated by the 14 day teacher strike.

The Chair announced that the Committee had concluded the posted business and adjourned the meeting. The next School Committee meeting is February 26, 2024 at 6:30.

Adjourned at 9:40 pm

Lisa Mazzola
School Committee Secretary

Date: 1/12/24