

**Town of Norwood  
School Committee Meeting  
Hybrid  
Wednesday, December 21, 2022**

A hybrid meeting of the Norwood School Committee was held on Wednesday, December 21, 2022. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. (The public can access the meeting in person at the Savage Educational Center or live via NCM on cable, as it is live-streamed. For the cable channel guide and on-line link, please visit: <https://norwoodcommunitymedia.org> ).

**Committee Members Present:** David Hiltz, Acting Chair; Ms. Teresa Stewart, Dr. Joan Giblin and Ms. Kate Sibbing-Dunn

**Committee Member Excused:** Ms. Anne Marie Mazzola, Chair

**Administrators Present:** Dr. Dave Thomson, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Alec Wyeth, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, Curriculum and Assessment; Ms. Karin Sheridan, Director of Finance and Operations and Dr. Charisse Taylor, Director of Strategic Initiatives

**Minutes:** Ms. Sibbing-Dunn made a motion to approve the following minutes:

- December 7, 2022 - Business Meeting Minutes; and
- December 7, 2022 - Executive Session Meeting Minutes

This motion was seconded by Ms. Stewart. The Committee voted in favor 3-0-1 (Dr. Giblin abstained).

**Correspondence:** None.

**Warrants:** Mr. Hiltz informed that warrants were signed on behalf of the School Committee. He then shared the warrant report.

-Payroll Warrants:	\$2,091,310.52
-Accounts Payable:	\$ 1,575.27
	\$ 508,031.94
	\$ 523.79
	\$ 383.83
	\$ 119,638.37
	\$ 67.95
	\$ 347,456.08
	\$ 11,041.70
	\$ 11,012.00
	<u>\$ 333,014.61</u>
-Approved for:	\$3,424,056.06

**Public Forum:** Mr. Hiltz informed that this was the time in the meeting for members of the public to address the School Committee with items that they would like to see

on a future agenda. The School Committee has switched to a hybrid meeting format and the public can access the meeting in person at the Savage Educational Center or live via NCM on cable, as it is live-streamed. For the cable channel guide and on-line link, please visit: <https://norwoodcommunitymedia.org>.

Mr. Hiltz reminded that there are now two ways the public can participate in the public forum portion of the meeting. (1) In person at the meeting (sign up in advance at the Superintendent's Office by noon the day of the meeting to pre-register, or sign in at the meeting; and (2) Call the Superintendent's Office at 781-762-6804 by noon on the day of the meeting to register and receive a meeting link that will be accessible for public forum only.

No one registered in advance or at the meeting for Public Forum and Mr. Hiltz declared Public Forum closed at this point. Mr. Hiltz informed that the next School Committee Meeting will be on January 11, 2023.

**Appearances:** Comprehensive School Health Services Grant: Nurse Leader, Jill Driscoll, was here this evening to update the Committee on the CSHS Grant. She informed that:

- CSHS grant was awarded in 2019 by the Mass DPH School Health Unit in the amount of \$95,000 for 10 years;
- Intended to address staffing, equipment, mental health and equity issues;
  
- Workforce Investment Grant was awarded in the fall of 2021;
- \$100,000 a year for Fiscal Year 2022 and 2023;
- Intended to address staffing needs for school nursing, mental health and case management.

Mrs. Driscoll shared the use of grant funds to date.

The CSHS and Workforce Investment grants budget for FY 2022/2023 for School Committee approval will continue to:

- Provide a nurse for the preschool;
  - Provide a .4 FTE Adjustment Counsellor for the Bridge Program at CMS
- New Positions:
- Add .5 FTE nurse at CMS Increasing current nursing staff from 1.5 to 2.0 FTE;
  - Add an additional .4 FTE Adjustment Counselor at CMS;
  - Add .48 FTE position to staff a proposed Family Connection Center;
  - Add .48 FTE nurse for district wide coverage and case management.

Mrs. Driscoll and Dr. Taylor elaborated on their ideas for the Family Connection Center, saying that they would like it to be at the Savage as that is where the Registrar's Office is. A Family Connection Center would be a central place for families to come to to find out information about the Schools, the Community and services available to residents of Norwood.

Dr. Giblin made a motion to approve the .4 FTE Adjustment Counselor for the Bridge Program at the CMS and to continue a .6 Nurse to continue at the preschool, which was seconded by Ms. Stewart. The Committee voted in favor 4-0.

Dr. Giblin made a motion to approve a .5 FTE Nurse at CMS; a .4 Adjustment Counselor at CMS; and .48 FTE Nurse for district wide coverage and case management, which was seconded by Ms. Stewart. The Committee voted in favor 4-0.

Ms. Sibbing-Dunn made a motion to approve the .48 FTE position to staff a Family Connection Center while there is grant money to be funded for FY23, which was seconded by Ms. Stewart for discussion.

There was some discussion regarding the funding for the Family Connection Center.

Regarding the motion on the table, the Committee voted against 1-3 (Mr. Hiltz, Dr. Giblin and Ms. Stewart voted against).

**Superintendent's Report and/or Late Agenda:** Dr. Thomson updated on the following:

**Superintendents Goals:**

- Implementing Culturally proficient teaching methods:
  - Universal goals for teachers and administrators
  - One observation with Administrator
  
- Instructional Rounds (ahead of schedule):
  - Training of Administration
  - HS and MS - each had one
  - Elementary initial at the Prescott
  - Others scheduled for the spring
  
- Regular Visits to Schools to observe progress on District Goals and Initiatives:
  - Opening visits at each school
  - Schedule in earnest in January

**Communication:**

- Communications workshop - 5/16/22
- Coffee with the Superintendent - 10/20/22
- Next Coffee - 1/11/23 @ 10 a.m.
- Facebook Live - 1/24/23 @ 5 p.m.
- Monthly Newsletters
- PTO advisory (10/20/22); (1/24/23 @ 6 p.m.)
- Communications review - January

Dr. Thomson informed that we have recently updated our translation service to Lexikeet, which will allow translation in 100 different languages.

New Middle School Design: Dr. Thomson updated that with regards to the New CMS Building Design:

- They are carefully monitoring "Value Engineering"
- Have full participation in meetings and work groups,

Strategic Plan Reflecting Equity and EL Program Review:

- Revised Strategic Plan to include recommendations from equity audit
- Improving Translation Services:
  - Parent Square
  - New Translation Service - Lexikeet

February Vacation: Dr. Thomson said that after the last meeting, he had a call with the Town Manager and the Rec Department and it looks like the Recreation Department will be able to extend some programming and should be able to have some options for families during February vacation. He encouraged families to look for the Recreation Department Flyer that should come out after the holidays.

Grant for Acceleration Academy: Dr. Thomson updated that we hope to hear on the grant funding before we leave for school break.

Budget Process:

- Departments are compiling FY24 budget requests
- Entire budget will be consolidated after the break
- Meet mid-January to review requests
- Major concerns over budget drivers for FY24 (FinCom slides)

Enrollment:

- As of December 19th;
- 288 Students have withdrawn from NPS;
- 140 were Sped, EL or have EL as a 2nd language;
- 570 new registrations - (246 of these are SPED, EL or EL as a 2nd language)
- Increase of 106 students with at least one category of need.

Job Openings:

- SPED teachers;
- Preschool Teacher
- School Psychologist
- 7 paraprofessionals
- Long and Short Term Subs
- Extended Day Staff

Dr. Thomson shared his condolences to the family of Tom McQuaid who passed away this week from a short illness. Dr. Thomson added that he was a great person who will be sorely missed.

Dr. Thomson wished everyone a wonderful holiday season and encouraged everyone to enjoy the down time.

Quarterly Report on Cultural Proficiency Professional Learning: Dr. Wyeth updated on the CRISP work with the Highlander Institute. (Professional Development for the staff to date). He said there was a staggered start with the elementary staff and Grade 6-12 staff. He said that on September 6th all elementary teachers, including new teachers, were given an introductory overview of the CRISP work that was done last year. The staff reviewed the four domains:

- awareness;
- community building;
- cognitive development; and
- critical consciousness

Dr. Wyeth informed that the last Professional Development Session will be on February 8th.

**Budget:** Budget Sub Committee Meeting: Ms. Stewart said the Members have received, in their packets, the draft minutes and links to materials reviewed at the Budget Sub Committee Meeting on December 14th. She added that two items that were discussed in detail at that meeting that Ms. Sheridan will present tonight were:

- Preschool Analysis and recommendations for a fee increase for SY23-24; and
- The budget drivers for FY24, which Ms. Sheridan will be presenting tonight.

Also discussed at the December 14th meeting were:

- The budgetary implications of the strategic plan (which Dr. Taylor will discuss more this evening); and
- Policy KCD and the updated version and current law it is based on. This was discussed in the Budget Subcommittee Meeting since it will impact the work of the budget subcommittee and the process for grant approval.

Other items discussed in the last budget meeting included:

- Finalizing the presentation for the Finance Commission Meeting.;
- Equitable budgeting, also known as student based budgeting.

The next Budget Subcommittee Meeting will be on January 6, 2023.

Dr. Giblin made a motion to table the Policy KCD conversation.

Ms. Stewart said at the last meeting it was voted that Policy KCD would be moved over to the Budget Subcommittee and the Budget Subcommittee has already

spent extensive time on this item.

Dr. Giblin wondered why the Policy Subcommittee has put together an agenda that includes this item with is not urgent. She is not clear what the Policy Subcommittee's role is if it is not to review policy before coming to the whole Committee.

Ms. Stewart said she expressed her concerns at the last meeting that the proposed timeline of waiting until July was too late due to the fact that MASC put out a new version in September based on the new law and we have to follow that law.

Dr. Giblin said she was just asking for a postponement until after the scheduled January Policy Subcommittee Meeting.

Mr. Hiltz said as acting Chair he will hold off on the motion until we get to that part of the agenda.

Preschool Analysis and Fee Adjustment: Ms. Sheridan gave an overview of the recent Preschool analysis and then recommended a fee adjustment. The towns used in the fee analysis were Westwood, Canton, Sharon, Dedham, Walpole, Mansfield, Medfield and Stoughton.

- RATE ANALYSIS
  - A review of the surrounding towns preschool tuition rates revealed Norwood is below the average.
  - If we raise next year's tuition rates 3.5% we would still be under the average
  - The estimated increase in revenue if it were similar student count would be about \$9,463
  - Ms. Sheridan thanked our financial analyst Ava Martin who assisted with this preschool analysis.

Ms. Sheridan is recommending raising the preschool tuition by 3.5% next year which will still keep us under average. She reminded that we haven't raised tuition since 2018.

There was some discussion that the analysis of the surrounding towns is different than if the analysis was with DART Schools. Dr. Taylor shared the DART Grouping that Norwood is in:

- |             |                |
|-------------|----------------|
| -Cambridge  | -Falmouth      |
| -Gloucester | -North Hampton |
| -Hudson     | -Peabody       |
| -Medford    | -Watertown     |
| -Weymouth   | -Woburn        |

Ms. Sibbing-Dunn made a motion to do a comparison of preschool tuitions with the DART Schools.

After some discussion, Ms. Sibbing-Dunn retracted her motion.

Dr. Giblin made a motion to approve an increase of 3.5% since it has been over a decade since the last increase, which was seconded by Ms. Stewart. The Committee voted in favor 4-0.

FY24 Budget Drivers: Ms. Sheridan shared the FY24 Budget Drivers/ Busters:

FY23 Budget:	\$.	52,801,033
3.5% Increase	\$	1,843,036
Total Estimated Budget Drivers / Busters	\$	2,644,142
% Increase Including Only Budget Drivers/Busters		5.01%
FY24 Current Staff with COLA Added For All Unsettled Contracts and Including New SC Approved Positions.	\$	904,543 (+1.71 %)
FY24 Estimated Out of District Tuition (69 students):	\$.	1,535,110 (+14%)

Ms. Sheridan reviewed the Union increases as well as mandated Special Education and EL drivers She also included the increase for the bus contract.

Ms. Sheridan informed that we need to get another 1.51% to cover the budget or we need to take 1.51% from the budget to get a balanced budget. She said it's going to be a really difficult budget year.

Ms. Stewart updated that it has been talked about in the Budget Meetings, Chair Mazzola has contacted Alan Slater and Bill Plasko as the Chairs of the other Boards to request resuming the Budget Balancing Committee in January and that has yet to be scheduled. Ms. Stewart said we need to look at how we can utilise the Special Education Reserve Fund; Free Cash; the Override Stabilization Fund, etc.

Dr. Thomson said the unanticipated increase of out of district special education creates a budget buster not only for us, but for every district.

**Old Business:** Middle School Building Update: Ms. Stewart and Mr. Hiltz updated on the Middle School Building Project, adding that the members have received materials in their packets from the MSBC Meetings of November 21st and December 12th. They also received the material from a meeting that Dr. Taylor and Ms. Stewart attended on December 2nd with Members of the Working Group, the Rec. Center and the youth leagues regarding field use, parking and the traffic of the Coakley site starting in June 2023.

Dr. Thomson gave some of the update under his report

Ms. Stewart added that there will be a public forum on January 26th at 7:00 p.m. at the High School.

Mr. Hiltz said due to increased supply costs, there have been some cosmetic items that have been taken out of the project, with the option of some being put back in if the costs level off.

Ms. Stewart said she has had a conversation with State Representative John Rogers regarding the fact that MSBA is not adjusting for inflations.

Superintendent's Goals: This was included in Superintendents Update earlier in the meeting.

NCSO Youth Substance Use and Mental Health Task Force: Ms. Stewart updated on the last two meetings which were on November 21st (Ms. Stewart and Chair Mazzola attended) and December 12th (Ms. Stewart attended). She shared that the presentation in November was about Healthy Relationships and Abuse Prevention in Adolescents from the Youth Speak Department of DOVE. Ms. Stewart shared some of the alarming statistics shared at this presentation.

There were three different presenters at the December presentation. There was a presentation on the *Lifeline Suicide Prevention Curriculum*; a presentation on *Project Here* (a free substance abuse prevention resource to every public Middle School); and the final presentation was from the Attorney General's Office about the Opioid Settlement Fund for opioid prevention. She said it has come to her attention that Norwood received \$150,882.68 in November which is supposed to be used for prevention efforts. Stacy Lane is on vacation, but Ms. Stewart will reach out to her to see how these funds will be used.

Policy KCD Public Gifts to the Schools: Dr. Giblin had earlier in the meeting made a motion to table this item so that the Policy Sub Committee can review and bring back to the full Committee at the next SC Meeting in January.

Ms. Stewart said there was a motion made and approved to move this policy forward as the law changed in September and the Policy changes need to be made.

Regarding the motion on the table, after some discussion, Ms. Sibbing-Dunn seconded the motion. The motion failed 1-3 against (Dr. Giblin voted in favor).

Ms. Stewart read the updated Public Gifts to the Schools Policy:

*In accordance with state law, all grants and gifts to the District shall be reviewed and accepted by the School Committee before expenditure or use. In the case of gifts from industry, business, or special interest groups, no expensive advertising or promotion may be involved in any donation to the schools.*

*Gifts will automatically become the property of the school district. Any gift of cash, regardless of donor intent, will be accepted by vote of the School Committee kept separate from the general fund, and expended at the discretion of the Committee, as provided by law.*



*The Committee directs the Superintendent to assure that an appropriate expression of thanks is given all donors. Legal REF: M.G.L. 44:53A, 71:37A*

Dr. Thomson said we will list the grants with a short description for the School Committee to accept.

Dr. Giblin made a motion to approve Policy KCD, which was seconded by Ms. Stewart. The Committee voted in favor 3-1 (Dr. Giblin voted against).

**Policy: Policy Sub Committee Update:** Dr. Giblin updated on the work of the Policy Sub Committee.

- School Improvement Template (met yesterday and a draft of an updated School Improvement Template will be coming soon)
- Discussed working with PTO's (will table now);

Dr. Giblin said they will be requesting direct instruction from the Committee for each one of the meetings moving forward.

**New Business: Strategic Plan:** Dr. Taylor said they have been working very diligently on revising the Strategic Plan. (The Members had a link to the summary document). She said the goals that were highlighted were the ones they worked on with Mass Insight that were revised to have more of an equity focus. There are some goals that have moved on to the monitoring phase, which shows some progress. Dr. Taylor said there could be some budget implications that we will have to pay attention to while building this next budget.

There was some discussion regarding using the wording "paused" on Objective 2.1. The Committee agreed to change the wording to "monitor" progress.

Dr. Giblin made a motion to approve the Strategic Plan updates, which was seconded by Ms. Stewart. The Committee voted in favor 4-0.

**Legislative Advocacy:** Ms. Stewart sent out some questions to Administration on December 9th and she has compiled the results and has had a talk with Representative Rogers. She will be reaching out to Senator Rush and Senator Warren's office about Federal questions and concerns that she wants to raise, including:

- What we are experiencing at LMPA;
- Concerns around Early Intervention;
- The reimbursement rate of MSBA for the new Middle School project;
- The 14% inflation of FY24 for Out of District tuition.

She shared some of John Roger's thoughts and suggestions with the Committee.

Ms. Stewart asked the other Members to let her know if they have any other legislative issues they would like raised.

**Consent Agenda: Acceptance of (1) One Donation:**

-Bays State Textiles - November Rebate - \$483.75

Dr. Giblin made a motion to accept this donation/rebates, which was seconded by Ms. Stewart . The Committee Members were polled and voted unanimously in favor 4-0.

**School Committee Addenda:** Ms. Stewart reminded that we do have a workshop on January 10th with MASC. She asked the Members to please get the self-evaluation back to Dorothy Presser by January 2nd. Ms. Stewart then wished everyone a wonderful holiday break.

Ms. Sibbing-Dunn also wished everyone a great break and thanked everyone in this School Committee Room for what they do.

Dr. Giblin wished everyone a restful and happy break. She reminded that the all the students will go back on January 4th except the High School students who will go back for a half day on the 3rd.

Mr. Hiltz echoed the sentiments of the other Members.

**Executive Session:** Mr. Hiltz informed that there would be an Executive Session for contract negotiations.

Ms. Stewart made a motion for Executive Session at 10:06 p.m. which was seconded by Ms. Sibbing-Dunn. The Committee Members were polled and voted in favor 4-0.

**Adjournment:** Mr. Hiltz made a motion for adjournment at 10:38 p.m., which was seconded by Ms. Stewart. The Members were posted and voted unanimously in favor 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted:

Donna G. Doliner, Clerk  
Norwood School Committee