

Town of Norwood
School Committee Meeting
Hybrid
Wednesday, January 25, 2023
Traveling School Committee - Balch Elementary School

A hybrid meeting of the Norwood School Committee was held on Wednesday, January 25, 2023 at the Balch Elementary School. The meeting was called to order at 7:0 p.m. (The public can access the meeting in person 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: Ms. Anne Marie Mazzola, Chair; Ms. Teresa Stewart, Dr. Joan Giblin, Mr. David Hiltz and Ms. Kate Sibbing-Dunn

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

Mrs. Diane Ferreira welcomed everyone to the Balch Elementary School this evening and shared a power point presentation of the “Balch in Pictures” from September until now. Some of the students spoke on the process of electing the Balch Student Council as well as some of the great ideas and activities that the Student Council has hosted.

Mrs. Ferreira asked Ms. Ellen Norton to explain the Adult EL Classes that are offered at the Balch with help from the Norwood Library, the Norwood Recreation Department and students from Norwood High School.

Minutes: Ms. Stewart made a motion to approve the following minutes:
-MASC Workshop Minutes - January 10, 2023;
-January 11, 2023 (Business Minutes)

Mr. Hiltz seconded the motion. The Committee voted in favor 5-0.

Ms. Stewart made a motion to table the January 11, 2023 Executive Session Minutes for clarification in Executive Session, which was seconded by Mr. Hiltz. The Committee voted in favor 5-0.

Correspondence: None.

Warrants: Chair Mazzola informed that she has signed warrants on behalf of the School Committee. Chair Mazzola then shared the warrant report.

Payroll Warrant: \$1,769,200.64

Accounts Payable:	\$ 815.60
	\$ 84,239.83
	\$ 25,382.10
	\$ 49,371.04
	\$ 25,588.49
	<u>\$ 80,188.05</u>
Approved for:	\$2,034,785.75

Public Comment: Chair Mazzola 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 and the public can access the meeting in person 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> .

The Chair 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 Chair Mazzola declared Public Forum closed at 7:19 p.m.

Appearances: Playground Proposal: Mr. Stephen Olsen, Principal of the Oldham Elementary School, was here this evening to request that the PTO be able to fundraise for a handicap accessible swing set, adding that they currently have two swing sets that are not handicapped accessible. He said that the goal is to use current funds and fundraise an additional \$5,000 to purchase a handicapped accessible structure.

Dr. Giblin made a motion to approve this request, which was seconded by Ms. Stewart. The Committee voted in favor 5-0.

SEL Curriculum Adoption: (The Chair moved this item up in the agenda.) Mr. Stephen Olsen and Dr. Wyeth reviewed how the process has gone of adopting a new SEL Curriculum. Mr. Olsen said the Committee working on this reviewed some programs and narrowed the choices down to:

- Character Strong;*
- Harmony; and*
- Mosaic.*

After all three programs were reviewed, the Curriculum Committee chose *Character Strong.*

Program Costs:

Character Strong Purpose Full People:

-5 year contract for grades 1-5:	\$29,728.75
-5 year contract for grades 1-8	\$29,831.28
-3 year contract for grades 1-5:	\$22,298.69
-3 year contract for grades 1-8:	\$24,303.94
-3 year Second Step contract for K:	\$ 5,939.00
(will use FY23 Program Adoption Account)	

Dr. Wyeth recommended the 5 year contract for grades 1-8 in the amount of \$29,831.28 and the 3 year second step for Kindergarten in the amount of \$5,939.00.

Ms. Stewart made a motion to approve both of Dr. Wyeth's recommendations, which was seconded by Dr. Giblin. The Committee voted in favor 5-0.

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

Superintendent Outreach:

- Coffee with superintendent 1/11
- Facebook Live 1/24 (about 56 people participated)
- PTO Advisory 1/24 (may do another date in late March)
- Monthly Newsletter 1/31
- Next PTO late March
- Will schedule another Coffee probably in April (possibly in the afternoon)

Upcoming Appreciation Events:

- National School Counseling Week, February 6-10
- School Resource Officer Appreciation Day (Feb. 15th)

Expanded Learning Time Kick Off:

- Partnering with Mass Insight (worked with Mass Insight previously with Equity Audit)
- Looking at successful models
- Viability for Program in Norwood
- Researching ongoing funding models

Job Openings

- Special Ed Teachers
- Preschool teacher
- School psychologist
- 7 paraprofessional
- Long and short term subs
- LTS reading
- Extended Day Staff

Budget: Budget Sub Committee Update: Ms. Stewart informed that in their packets the Member have received the minutes from the January 20th meeting; the To-Do List generated from that meeting; Link to the DESE Website that shows the DART Districts; and the finalized minutes from the January 6th meeting.

Ms. Stewart said that on January 20th Dr. Thomson, Chair Mazzola and Ms. Stewart met for a planning meeting, trying to move forward with the many different tasks under the Budget Sub Committee. Ms. Haley (Finance Liaison), John Cianciarulo (Town's Budget Management Analyst) were in attendance. Mr. Cianciarulo updated from a conference he was at with Governor Healey. The Governor has committed to funding Chapter 70; to hopefully increasing funding for student transportation; funding McKinney Vento; and she's looking into additional funding to assist with migrant students. The Governor's Budget will be filed on March 1st but she hopes to get the numbers to municipalities earlier than that.

Ms. Stewart updated that the BBC meeting has been moved to February 6th. She said they will be brining the request to BBC to relook at how Chapter 70 is allocated, the issue of medicaid reimbursement and possible McKinney Vento Revolving Fund.

Ms. Stewart shared the DESE DART Data, informing that currently our comparison cohort has changed in the last couple of years and she shared the comparison group:

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

Ms. Stewart said that there is no Town on the list that was on the list a year or two ago, which is reflective of Norwood's changing demographics and increasing student needs.

With the announcement of the Assistant Superintendent's upcoming retirement, the School Committee has requested Dr. Thomson and the Sub Committee do a market analysis on the Assistant Superintendent's position, which they have been working on.

The Budget Sub Committee is still working on the FY24 Budget and is on target to bring the Draft A Version of the Budget to the full School Committee on February 15th.

They are also planning the Budget Workshop that will be held on February 27th. She asked the Members to give feedback on items they would like covered.

And as a follow-up to the advocacy work Ms. Stewart has been doing, she updated that Representative Rogers filed legislation on Chapter 70 money and

ensuring that it includes inflation for FY24, FY25 and FY26. She is still working with him on other issues.

Capital Outlay Update: The Chair (S. C. Representative to Capital Outlay) and Dr. Thomson went to Capital Outlay last Thursday. She said that during the budgeting process last year, Capital Outlay requested that there be more meetings throughout the year. She added that with the passing of last year's Chair, Mr. McQuaid, it was necessary to vote on a new Chair, who will be Bob Donnelly.

The Chair said that they did get an update from the Town on some of the budget sources for some of the Capital Outlay items that have already been approved in the fall.

There was some discussion on the Capital Outlay Committee By-Laws and Policy. There are definitely some changes/updates that need to be made, including that the Superintendent of Schools should be added to the ex officio members, as the Library Director was added in 2018.

There is another meeting scheduled for March.

The Chair reminded that we need to get our IT Projects to the Selectmen for approval to get on the Spring Town Warrant by the last week in March.

Old Business: Elementary Sub Committee Update: Mr. Hiltz has forwarded to the Committee the draft minutes from the meeting of January 18th meeting as well as the December 22nd meeting. He said the last meeting was part 2 of the listening session with the principals. He said it has been very helpful getting the principals thoughts and perspectives with their unique buildings with their own set of challenges. Mr. Hiltz said we, as the School Committee want to do what's best for our students and the spaces that they occupy

Mr. Hiltz said the next Sub Committee Meeting will be on Tuesday, March 14th (virtual) and they will begin working on a tentative timeline and as well as beginning the RFP process for a consulting firm.

Dr. Giblin suggested that the Elementary Sub Committee solicit feedback from PTO's and School Councils and to incorporate buy-in and feedback from the Community early.

Ms. Stewart suggested having a public forum along with surveys. Dr. Giblin said she can help with analyzing the data, as she is a faculty member and has students who need projects.

Dr. Thomson said he is expecting that much of the outreach will be conducted by whoever is hired as a consultant

Strategic Plan Equity Objectives: Dr. Taylor began by saying that she has previously reviewed the strategic objectives that were recrafted through the work with the Equity Audit and today she would be highlighting some of the changes that have been made since the approval of the Strategic Plan.

1.4 Dr. Taylor updated that we begun to recruit counseling interns from William James and we also have registered for Bridgewater State University's Education Career Fair to get an early jump on getting new teachers and recent grads. She said we have a nice cohort from across the district going to the fair so candidates can see a variety of faces with a variety of goals which hopefully makes our positions more attractive.

Dr. Taylor said she and Dr. Grandt are participating in *Influence 100*, which is a leadership program for leaders of color, helping them to advance. She said they are also on the waitlist for *The Massachusetts Partnership for Diversity of Education* which is a member affiliate recruitment firm that helps attract candidates of color for a variety of roles. They also host their own career fairs and they provide professional development and HR support as well.

3.4 We have instituted the Student Advisory Council that will be working with the School Committee; we now have Homework Clubs running for multilingual learners; we have plans to expand summer programming for ELA, Math and a summer academy for multi-lingual learners. Also there is expanded grading access for Algebra I.

5.1 Ms. Taylor informed that we are in Year #2 of Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Practices Training with the Highlander Institute. We have coaches in each school working with the staff. We also launched CRISP Ambassadors. And finally, tonight we have adopted a new SEL Program.

5.2 We have the CRISP Champions, and this year, the Administrative Team is engaging in a book study called *Changing the Narrative - How to Foster an Anti-Racist Culture in your School*. The book gets people to reflect on their own racial journeys and gives practical tools to implement at staff meetings and while interacting with students.

Dr. Wyeth said that we have developed goals for the teacher evaluation system that is aligned with CRISP. He added that is a key piece to that initiative.

5.3 This year we launched *Parent Square* for school and district-wide communications. We've launched *Superintendent's Monthly Newsletter*. We have switched our translation service to Lexikeet, which provides immediate access and is easier to use. Dr. Taylor said a survey has been sent out to families and caregivers asking how the district can support them, but they didn't get much response (2%).

Dr. Wyeth reminded that the adult education program we heard about this evening is also an extension of the family outreach.

The Members had an opportunity for questions and comments.

MSBC Update: Ms. Stewart said in the packets the Members have the minutes from recent working groups and what will be talked about at tomorrow's meeting. There will be a public forum tomorrow.

Dr. Taylor said that Compass has been working with the youth groups and they have been coordinating what fields will be available and when. Compass is making a big effort to make sure that each time has storage options for their equipment; and they have been taking about minor adjustments for the end times for some of the recreation leagues (mid-June instead of late June).

Dr. Thomson added that there have been some questions about running summer camp at the Coakley Middle School. He said there will be fencing in certain places but summer camp will happen at the Coakley this year.

Mr. Hiltz informed that the last working group meeting got postponed until tomorrow night at the High School at 6:00 p.m. because there is an Open Forum at 7:00 p.m. to update the public to date and on plans moving forward. Mr. Hiltz said the main concern at this point is that there has already been two rounds of cuts and are hoping that there doesn't need to be more cuts. He said we will know more after the next meeting.

There was some discussion around seeing if there can be some legislative action around MSBA reimbursement due to the huge inflation costs of materials which are increasing the costs of construction.

Dr. Thomson said ground should be broken in June.

Policy: Policy Sub Committee Update: Ms. Sibbing-Dunn updated the the Policy Sub Committee met on the 18th and worked on the travel reimbursement policy procedural issues Ms. Sheridan was working on. They were working to align the policy with the guidelines the Town has been using.

Ms. Sibbing-Dunn said that the KCD Policy was reviewed yesterday with the PTO's. She said the meeting with PTO's yesterday went well. She said it was a good opportunity to let the PTO's know that changes are coming and it was also a good chance to do some information sharing and gathering. The next steps are to get everyone on the same page, share ideas and get everyone in compliance. The next Policy Sub Committee Meeting will be on February 10th.

Ms. Stewart suggested including the booster clubs into these conversations as well.

New Business: Consent Agenda: Report from Office Hours on January 18:

Mr. Hiltz said that he was there for an hour and a half on January 18th and there were no visitors. He tallied that in 6 hours of office hours, to date there has been one visitor. February 3rd will be the next scheduled office hours with Ms. Stewart and Dr. Giblin.

Administrative Assistants Contract: Mr. Hiltz summarized the contract with the Administrative Assistants Union: (Mr. Hiltz and Ms. Sibbing-Dunn served on this Committee)

- This is a 3-year contract, good through June 2026;
- The COLA is for 2% each year over the next 3 years;
- Longevity pay was increased by \$250 at each level;
- They will work an extra 5 days over the summer (195 days);

Mr. Hiltz announced that Union President, Diane Rogers, is retiring and Mr. Hiltz thanked her for her years of service on behalf of the negotiation team.. He said her years of service are appreciated.

Ms. Stewart made a motion to approve the Administrative Assistants contract, which was seconded by Dr. Giblin. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Health and Safety Update: Dr. Thomson said he had a health and safety update from Stacy Lane, Director of the Health Department.

General Covid-19 Metrics:

- 42 cases within the last 14 days (Jan. 1 - Jan. 14), which is a decrease of 17.6% from the two weeks prior;
- 56 positive lab tests for Covid within the last 14 days (Jan. 1- Jan 14), which is a decrease of 16.4% from the two weeks prior;
- Average daily case rate per 100,000 people in Norwood is 9.5;
- Percent positive rate (for Jan. 1- Jan. 14) is 9.9%;
- Overall, the number of Covid cases in Norwood is declining and low compared to this time last year;
- Overall Covid hospitalization rate for Norfolk county is down by 12.1%;
- Severe Covid hospitalization rate for Norfolk County is down by 13.2%;
- Approximately 60% of people in Norwood are fully vaccinated, but only around 25-30% of people eligible for a booster vaccine have been boosted.

Covid-19 Metrics Among School-Aged Children:

- School-aged children account for approximately 7% of all Covid-19 cases (Jan. 1-14);
- 63% of children aged 5-11 are fully vaccinated, only 5% are boosted;
- 70% of children aged 12-15 are fully vaccinated, only 7% are boosted;
- 83% of children aged 16-19 are fully vaccinated, only 12% are boosted.

Wastewater Metrics:

- Norwood's Wastewater Sampling Location is MWRA Southern, which samples several other towns in addition to Norwood;

-The concentration of Covid-19 virus particles in the wastewater spiked in early January, but the concentration is slowly decreasing. However, the current concentration is still higher than it was three months prior.

Current Covid-19 Variants:

- The most prevalent variant is the Omicron variant:
 - Nearly all new and recent cases of Covid-19 can be attributed to the Omicron variant;
- A new Sub-variant (which is still considered the Omicron variant) has been identified:
 - XBB.1.5.
 - XBB.1.5. as a sub variant is more immune-evasive transmissible than previous sub variants (e.g. BA.5).

Covid-19 Viral Respiratory Disease Prevention:

- Vaccination for Covid-19 and the flu are available by appointment at the Health Department;
- Free Covid-19 at-home test kits are available for pick-up at Town Hall.

DPH Update:

DPH states they are monitoring Covid activity and will make recommendations as needed. The tools to help prevent the spread of Covid are well-known and there are no new tools on the horizon. The best recommendation to prevent illness, hospitalization, and death from Covid is to get vaccinated. People who are sick should get tested and talk to their doctor about Paxlovid if they test positive. Other recommendations to prevent the spread of all viral respiratory disease include: stay home when sick and stay away from others who are sick, practice good hand hygiene and cover your coughs and sneezes. People can consider choosing to wear a mask, avoiding crowds (especially indoors) and bringing fresh air into indoor spaces.

Dr. Thomson said the next vaccination clinic will be tomorrow night for the community.

After some discussion about clusters, Mrs. Driscoll texted in (as she was watching this evening's meeting) to confirm that a cluster consists of 3 or more cases.

Consent Agenda: Acceptance of (1) Donation:

- Bay State Textiles -December Rebate - \$422.00

Ms. Stewart made a motion to accept this donation/rebate, which was seconded by Mr. Hiltz. The Committee voted in favor 5-0.

School Committee Addenda: Dr. Giblin had none.

Ms. Sibbing-Dunn said she hopes to see many people from the community at the Public Forum tomorrow night.

Mr. Hiltz said if any one wants a link to tomorrow night's Public Forum please email newcmsproject.org. It will be at 7:00 p.m. in the GSU Lecture Hall at Norwood High School. He congratulated Diane Rogers, again, on her retirement.

Ms. Stewart said it was great to see the students of the Balch this evening, adding that they did a wonderful job presenting. She highlighted all the work that goes into being a School Committee Member and shared some of the accomplishments of the Committee while she has served in the past (almost) 6 years. Ms. Stewart then announced that she still has work to do and will be running again.

The Chair thanked Ms. Ferreira and the Balch School for hosting the Committee this evening. She said that she loves going to the schools and seeing all the wonderful things that go on. Chair Mazzola said that after really reflecting on all the work that has been done and all the work that still needs to be done, she will be running again. She said there was a lot of thinking that had to be done before making her decision as it is a lot work behind the scenes and a lot of time away from family.

Executive Session: Chair Mazzola informed that there would be an Executive Session for contract negotiations.

Ms. Stewart made a motion for Executive Session at 9:18 p.m. which was seconded by Ms. Sibbing-Dunn. The Committee Members were polled and voted in favor 5-0.

Adjournment: Mr. Hiltz made a motion for adjournment at 11:07 p.m., which was seconded by Ms. Stewart. The Members were polled and voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted:

Donna G. Doliner, Clerk
Norwood School Committee

