

**Town of Norwood  
School Committee Meeting  
School Committee Room @ Savage Educational Center  
Hybrid  
Wednesday, November 15, 2023**

A hybrid meeting of the Norwood School Committee was held on Wednesday, November 15, 2023. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. (The public can access the meetings in person at the Savage Educational Center or live via NCM on cable, as they are live-streamed. For the cable channel guide and on-line link, please visit: <https://norwoodcommunitymedia.org> ).

**Committee Members Present:** Dr. Joan Giblin, Interim Chair; Anne Marie Mazzola, Chair (arrived remotely from a work commitment at 9:15 p.m.); Ms. Teresa Stewart, Mr. David Hiltz and Ms. Kate Sibbing-Dunn

**Administrators Present:** Dr. Dave Thomson, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Charisse Taylor, Assistant Superintendent for Operations and Strategy; Dr. J. J. Munoz, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum; Ms. Karin Sheridan, Director of Finance and Operations (remote)

**Minutes:** Ms. Stewart made a motion to approve the following minutes, which were taken individually:

**-October 25, 2023 - Business Meeting Minutes;**

Ms. Stewart made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Ms. Sibbing-Dunn. The Committee voted in favor 4-0 (Chair Mazzola was not present).

**-October 5, 2023 - MASC Workshop Minutes;**

These minutes were tabled.

**Executive Sessions Minutes:**

**-October 16, 2023 - (Emerg. Exec. Session);**

Ms. Stewart made a motion to approve (with one edit - Ms. Stewart made a motion, not Ms. Sheridan), which was seconded by Mr. Hiltz. The Committee voted in favor of the amended Executive Session Minutes 4-0 (Chair Mazzola was not present).

**-October 25, 2023;**

Ms. Stewart made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Ms. Sibbing-Dunn. The Committee voted in favor 4-0 (Chair Mazzola was not present).

**-October 26, 2023;**

Ms. Stewart made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Dr. Giblin. The Committee voted 2-0-2 (Mr. Hiltz and Dr. Giblin abstained and Chair Mazzola was not present).

**-October 30, 2023 - (Annual Safety Update)**

Ms. Stewart made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Ms. Sibbing-Dunn. The Committee voted in favor 3-0-1 (Mr. Hiltz abstained and Chair Mazzola was not present).

**Correspondence:** None.

**Warrants:** The Interim Chair informed that Chair Mazzola is not in attendance yet so we will postpone the warrants.

**Public Comment:** Interim Chair Giblin 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 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>.

The Interim Chair reminded that there are now two ways the public can participate in the public comment 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 the Interim Chair declared Public Forum closed at 7:11 p.m.

**Appearances:** Facilities Quarterly Budget Update: Mr. Paul Riccardi and Ms. Mary O'Brien were here this evening to give the quarterly update for the Facilities Department. He said that the High School has had the most work orders, adding that HVAC, electric and plumbing are always the big ticket items. Mr. Riccardi reminded that this summer, the lights were all replaced at the High School and Dr. Crowley's lab was set up. He informed that it has been a very stressful year so far for the Facilities Department as there are currently two very sick men, one custodian passed away who worked at the Civic, and there is another custodian who has two very sick parents. There is \$180,000 in the Overtime Budget and currently only \$40,000 has been used so far. He also informed that there are two retirements coming up and he is concerned about replacing staff.

Ms. O'Brien shared that the School has used 67% of the Facilities Budget and the Town has used 33%. She said there was a sizeable surplus in the amount of

\$168,587 in FY23 due to very little snow and ice removal and the fact we are starting to see the benefits of handling many things in-house.

Mr. Riccardi said that when the Middle School comes on-line, we will need to add two custodians due to the size of the school and two lunches going on at the same time.

Ms. O'Brian also informed that there is a lot less vandalism this year compared to last year.

The Members had an opportunity for questions and comments.

Coakley Middle School Field Trip to DC: Dr. Fraczek was here this evening to request approval for a 4-day/3 night trip to Washington, D.C from May 28th - 31st, 2024. (This trip is organized by Hummingbird Student Tours. ) Dr. Fraczek informed that about 139 students have signed up already. This means they will have 12 chaperones and one nurse. Thanks to Tony Mazzucco and some fabulous parents, there are 14 scholarship available for this trip. Dr. Fraczek had sent the itinerary over previously, but has resent the itinerary as well as the list of students and chaperones.

Ms. Stewart reminded that we have approved the trip before for fundraising purposes and said we would do a final approval once we got the list of participants.

Mr. Hiltz made a motion to approve this out of state field trip, which was seconded by Ms. Stewart. The Committee voted in favor 4-0 (Chair Mazzola was not present).

Middle School Grade 5 Programmatic Decisions: Dr. Thomson and Dr. Fraczek updated on the new Middle School Grade 5 Programmatic Decisions. Ms. Stewart said Dr. Fraczek will be sharing an update on if we get all the programming in that is in the Ed Plan that we previously approved, what would that programming look like and then also what would the staffing look like.

Ms. Stewart informed that the Committee will have to vote on the two different options for staffing models this evening and after we vote on an option, then it will have to go to BBC to see how we will fund this for year 2025.

Dr. Fraczek shared:

-Master Schedule:

- Reduce to two lunch periods;
- Mustang Block placed central to day and reduced in time allowing more content time;
- Eliminating Bells and passing tie to allow more block scheduling in grade 5 that includes breaks and recess;

-Remains a 6-ay rotating schedule. Only essential arts will rotate in grade 5.

Dr. Fraczek said that adding grade 5 to CMS allows for greater access to specialist and more diverse content time while providing a more “elementary” feel. She reviewed what a grade 5 schedule would look like:

- Students placed on teams of 4 teachers;
- Students have a homeroom teacher that is their primary educator;
- More specialized instruction for math and reading;
- Students will rotate between social studies and science daily;
- Students will have STEM and computers as additional Essential Arts classes; and
- Students will have an introduction to World Language

Grade 5 Schedule:

- All grade level teachers have 1 Common Planning Time per day and 1 prep;
- Core subject scheduling can be determined by team in grade 5;
- Using trimesters allows for 5 Essential Arts classes.

Moving to Trimesters:

- Trimesters allow for more specials over the 4 years;
- Looking at how we want to integrate STEM and Computers (PLTW);
- Maintain currant WL time in 6-8 and add grade 5;
- Some reduction in total classes in certain years but overall gains across 4;
- Allows longer grading periods. Quarters can be rushed (4 weeks between progress reports and report cards).

Staffing Requests:

Basic Option - 12 FTE's vs. Robust Option - 17.85 FTE's

Mr. Mazzucco is budgeting \$500,000 for staffing. Chapter 70 aide may be able to help cover this.

Ms. Stewart informed that the Town has overwhelmingly supported the Ed Plan which includes the programatic decisions.

Ms. Sibbing-Dunn made a motion to support the robust plan which was seconded by Ms. Stewart. The Committee voted in favor 4-0.

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

Enrollment Grid: Dr. Thomson updated that there is a space problem at the Balch in the 4th grade. He said there is usually two adults in the classroom co-teaching and allowing for small group instruction. There is also a little space issue in 4th Grade at the Callahan as well.

Dr. Thomson updated on some of the fun and exciting events happening at the schools.

CMS:

- 11/06/23 - Grade 7 & 8 Spanish students went on a field trip to see a Flamenco Dancing performance;
- November 6-9 - Grade 7 Social Students students made artefacts and Ms. Rodriquez held a museum gallery walk Thursday during Mustang Block

Willett:

- 11/2/23 - The first annual Family STEM Night at the Willett was an extraordinary success. We had 120 of our students / families join us, and there were so many positive comments about the accessible, hands-on, and engaging learning activities that were facilitated for our students.

LMPA:

- We had an open house for interested families on 11/16/23 from 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. for next school year and limited openings this year.
- We are working to fill up our Thankful Thoughts Turkey with all the things we are thankful for in PreK.

NHS:

-Academics: Held a successful prospective student open house on October 16th for grade 8 families and potential transfer students. This night is intended to give a personalised approach to students and families who are weighing their high school options for next year and covers the NHS curriculum, guided student tours, co-curricular offerings, and opportunities to speak directly to administrators, department chairs and counselors.

Dr. Thomson was happy to give a big shout-out to the Marching Band who won a gold award recently at the MICCA Festival.

Field Hockey won in the Semi-Finals against Somerset/Berkley 2-1. They will head to the Championship game this Saturday Worcester Polytech and Dr. Thomson will let everyone know the time when it is announced.

The Cheer Team will be competing this Sunday in the State Competition. Dr. Thomson congratulated them on their success and wished them luck.

Dr. Thomson informed that we had four teams qualify this fall for the post-season: Football and Volleyball also qualified for the post season and he congratulated them and thanked them for representing Norwood so well.

School Updates:

-Cleveland:

- Student council elections were held for students in grades 4 and 5;
- Rosie in 2nd Grade won lunch with the principal at the Fall Festival.

-Prescott:

- The Prescott jumped right into the Character Strong Program this year. They recognized students who demonstrate and who went above and beyond in the area of respect and kindness.
- The Prescott held their Student council elections for grades 3-5.
- Last year Student Council successfully partnered with Norwood Food Services and raised over \$1,000 for Norwood Circle of Hope.

-TEC Board Meeting - quarterly update (in packets)

- Expanding Data Privacy - New York Pilot
  - Free to member districts;
- Financials are in great shape;
- Fully staffed

-Job Openings:

- Assistant Transportation Director;
- There is a retirement mid-year - we will be looking for an Elementary Library Media Specialist;
- Confidential Secretary to the School Committee;
- Special Education Teacher;
- Title 1 Teachers;
- Paraprofessionals;
- Van Drivers; and
- Extended Day Staff

**Budget: Quarterly Budget Transfer Report:** The Interim Chair said this is a report only. She suggested that we review the information provided in our packets and reach out to Ms. Sheridan with any questions.

Ms. Stewart said she doesn't like scratching anything Budget related from the agenda.

Interim Chair Giblin made a motion that the Members review this information on their own and send questions to Ms. Sheridan if necessary, as all the information is provided in the packets, which was seconded by Ms. Sibbing-Dunn. The Committee voted in favor 3-1 (Ms. Stewart voted against).

**Budget To Date - Quarterly Report -** Ms. Sheridan was here remotely this evening to present the Budget to Date. She reminded that we began the FY24 Budget with \$54,824,884.

Ms. Sheridan said this will be her last Budget to Date Report and said she wanted to change things up a little bit and try to give a report with more strategy than analysis. This includes estimates of all the salaries for the remainder of the year; the contracts (bus, copy machines, Out of District Tuition for students currently in the system, etc.).

<b>FY24 NPS School Budget</b>	<b>\$54,824,884</b>
Expended	\$10,010,579
Encumbrances	\$46,539,778
Available Balance	(\$1,725,473)
% of Budget Expended	18%
% of Budget Expended/Encumbered	103%
Budget Offsets required to balance budget	\$1,725,473
Adjusted Available Balance to date	\$0

**FY24 NPS Budget Update through 10/30/23 - Budget Funding Sources/ Strategy:**

<b>FY24 Budget Fund. Sources</b>	<b>General Fund</b>	<b>Non-Res. Tuition</b>	<b>Circuit Breaker</b>	<b>SPED Stab. Fund</b>	<b>Warrant Article - SPED</b>
FY24 Budget	\$54,824,884	\$47,235	\$4,364,047	\$550,000	\$2,359,643
Expend/ Encumb. To date	\$56,550,357	\$0	\$1,377,224	\$0	\$0
Balance as of 10/30/23	(\$1,725,473)	\$47,235	\$2,986,823	\$550,000	\$2,359,643
Add. Budget Offsets Req. To Balance Bud. To date	\$1,725,473	\$47,235	\$1,678,238	\$0	\$0
Projected Avail. FY24 Budget	\$0	\$0	\$1,308,585	\$550,000	\$2,359,643

Ms. Sheridan reminded that these Funding Sources need to be monitored throughout the year.

The Members had an opportunity for questions and requests for clarifications.

Ms. Sheridan then reviewed the FY24 NPS Budget Update through 10/30/23 by DESE Function Code; FY224 NPS Staff Update; and Circuit Breaker /OOD Tuition/ Special Ed Stabilisation Fund.

**Circuit Breaker:**

FY24 Begin Balance	Rev. Rec'd to Date	YTD Expend.	Balance to Date	Ant. FY24 Revenue
\$2,699,929	\$0	\$1,377,224	\$1,322,706	\$3,729,703

Ms. Sheridan shared the comparisons of Circuit Breaker through the years, the FY24 NPS Budget Updated Revolving Funds, FY24 Grant Funding and Medicaid.

Ms. Sheridan shared the budget challenges:

- Special Education Transportation;
- Out of District Tuition; and
- Net School Spending

Budget Transfers: Ms. Sheridan presented the budget transfers that need School Committee Approval:

- \$2,000 From Contracted Services/Comm. Services to Admin. Contr. Services for ARX/ED negotiation tool.
- \$146,000 From Admin. Salary to Assist. Supt. Salary
- \$8,967.24 From HS Salary Line (hire down) to workshops and postage
- \$363,291 movement of staff that needs to put in correct accounts

Mr. Hiltz made a motion to approve the transfers, which was seconded by Ms. Stewart. The Members were polled and voted in favor 4-0.

Grant Approvals: Ms. Sheridan reviewed the following grants for FY24:

	FY24	FY23
-FY24 Social-Emotional Learning Grant	\$62,487	\$72,732
-FY24 Comprehensive School Health Services Grant	\$95,000	\$95,000
-FY24 From Research to Practice Evidence Based Early Literacy Grant	\$67,515	\$54,850
-FY24 EA Homeless Families	\$ 3,432	\$ 0
Total Grant Awards:	\$228,434	222,582

Mr. Hiltz made a motion to approve these grants, which was seconded by Ms. Stewart for discussion. The Committee voted in favor 4-0.



Budget Sub Committee Update; Budget Balancing Committee Update; and Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles; (Chair Mazzola is still flying home and has not joined the meeting at this point) Ms. Stewart updated that in the packets are the minutes from the last Budget Sub Committee Meeting. The next meeting is tomorrow morning at 10:00 a.m. We will continue with all the work we have been doing.

They attended the last Budget Balancing Meeting of last Monday. In the packet are the updated projections from Mr. Mazzucco (they have not been verified by Ms. Sheridan or anyone from the School Department). There is also a diagram in there that was shared at the meeting. She said some on BBC are thinking about how we should plan for the next budget cycle. There is a lot of discussion that needs to happen about this diagram with pots of money. She does not think that another meeting has been scheduled yet. She had to leave a little early and was not there for the discussion around Chapter 70.

Dr. Taylor said there wasn't a discussion and she said that there still needs to be a conversation about how it will be divided up.

Ms. Stewart said the work that still needs to be done for Budget Sub Committee revolves around *what does budgeting look like for Fiscal Year 2025 and beyond*. She reminded that the Override Pledge ends in 2024 and we do not have a current agreement about how the budget is going to be allocated.

There was some discussion around a Core Budget, a SPED Budget and an EL Budget. Ms. Stewart said she is not in favor of having 3 budgets.

Dr. Taylor said, regarding BBC's request for School Committee to have 3 budgets, we are required to present a bottom line budget and we can not present 3 budgets as it will open us up to civil lawsuits / liabilities. She reminded that we need to follow state laws.

After some discussion around this topic, Ms. Stewart said she will keep saying all the things she has been saying. She informed that they don't go to FinCom until December 14th.

Ms. Stewart updated that Town Meeting did not finish in one night and will reconvene tomorrow night at 7:30 p.m. She said that they did not get to the School Warrant Articles so they will all be next. Ms. Stewart said one thing we need to reconsider is the requested amount of \$60,000 for the Student Services Audit, adding that FinCom will support \$60,000 but we may need to request more at this point. She shared that in other districts, the special education quotes were around \$37-40,000, and added that we need an audit for a more comprehensive student services. If we decide that we need to ask for more, which Ms. Stewart believed we should, it should be decide tonight as FinCom will be meeting again tomorrow night

at 5:30 p.m. and they can discuss and vote on a higher amount then. Dr. Thomson suggested a new amount of \$70-75,000 would be better.

After some discussion, Interim Chair Giblin made a motion to double the request for the Student Services audit to \$120,000, which was seconded by Ms. Stewart for discussion.

After realizing that the request would need to go out to bid if over \$100,000, Interim Chair Giblin amended her motion to \$100,000.

The Members were polled and voted in favor 4-0-1 (Chair Mazzola joined the meeting and abstained).

At this point, the Committee agreed to take a five minute recess at 9:17 p.m.

**Old Business: Superintendent Search Committee Participants:** Ms. Sibbing-Dunn updated that they have narrowed the applicants down for the Search Committee and she said they have let the Community know about the focus groups and the survey. The survey will be open until December 1st. The public forum will be on November 29th in the High School Library. The Community is invited to speak on goals for this position. Ms. Sibbing-Dunn said another focus group will be held for staff that same afternoon at the CMS at 3:45 p.m.

Ms. Sibbing-Dunn recapped the criteria that was agreed on. The decisions that were made were based on trying to make a well-rounded group. She said they have 5 parents instead of 4 because it seemed heavy on the elementary submissions and they wanted to add a High School parent to round it out a bit. She added that SPED is represented and FinCom is represented but the Facilities Department is not able to sit on the Committee. Ms. Sibbing-Dunn added that a Member of the Personnel Department was recommended to serve on the Committee instead of Facilities. If this group is voted on by the School Committee, the participants will be notified tomorrow.

Ms. Stewart felt that the Committee is elementary heavy and she would recommend that they add the person on the list that can represent the Middle School who has experience on other committees as well.

Ms. Stewart made a motion to approve with the addition of the Admin. who can represent the Middle School as well as the initiatives we are working on, which was seconded by Ms. Sibbing-Dunn. The Members approved 4-1 (Interim Chair Giblin voted against).

Ms. Sibbing-Dunn will reach out to those that are confirmed and thank all of those who reached out to be on the Committee. She added that orientation will be on December 4th with Jim Hardy.

Elementary School Space Utilization Analysis and Technical Support Services: Ms. Sheridan said there were three quotes and one dropped out as they were not able to give a quote at this time.

Flo Analytics - \$112,649 and another quote for some additional work in the amount of \$118,281.

The other quote was from AppGeo - \$67,014.

Ms. Sheridan said she said AppGeo has over 30 year of experience and came in as the lower bid. She has spoken with other districts that have used AppGeo over the years and have been happy with their services. At this point the recommendation would be to go with AppGeo.

Mr. Hiltz made a motion to approve the bid for AppGeo, which was seconded by Ms. Sibbing-Dunn. The Members were polled and voted in favor 5-0.

There was some discussion that there was money set aside for interface (\$6,000) that was not used that can be used for this since the quote went over the \$60,000.

Long Term Agenda Review: The Members agreed to table this item as Members can e-mail the Chair with their thoughts and requests.

**Policy:** Policy Sub Committee Update: Ms. Sibbing-Dunn updated that the Policy Sub Committee last met on October 31st. The next meeting will be on November 28th.

-They will be looking at these policies because of the March MASC Update. MASC rolled the policies below into BDFA and BDFAE without the 1,2,3.

- BDFA - School Council
- BDFAE - School Improvement Plan
- BDFA-E-1 - School Improvement Plan
- BDFA-E-2 - Submission and Approval of School Improvement Plan
- BDFA-E-3 - Conduct of School Council Business

Chair Mazzola reflected that she mistakenly, back in August, only put the updated language for BDFA and did not bring forward the deletion of BDFA-E-1, BDFA-E-2, BDFA-E-3 and then BDFAE (technically new) as a stand-alone document.

Interim Chair Giblin made a motion to table this until the next meeting and for Policy Sub Committee to provide clean copies for clarity, which was seconded by Ms. Sibbing-Dunn. The members were polled and voted in favor 5-0.

**New Business:** Extended Day MOA: Ms. Stewart said in the packets, there is a Memorandum of Agreement that would be between the School District and the Town. Also, there is a letter that we are proposing gets sent out.

Ms. Stewart emphasised this District's commitment to child care and want to acknowledge everything we have done and Dr. Thomson has done over the last 6 1/2 years to not only sustain but to grow our Extended Day Program. It is in a very different place today than it was. But she said there have been a lot of challenges. Through some very thoughtful and deliberate consideration and collaboration with our town, we are proposing that Extended Day start to transition from the Norwood Public Schools to the Norwood Recreation Department. Ms. Stewart said Dr. Thomson, Dr. Taylor, Ms. Sheridan have all been working on this with Mr. Mazzucco and John Kinney, Director of the Rec Center. Ms. Stewart and Matt Lane have also joined the working group to make sure that we are looking at all aspects of this in terms of the service to the community and the protection of the staff and build on the work the district has done over the past 6 1/2 years. Ms. Stewart shared that if this is approved tonight it will be on the Selectmen's Agenda on November 28th.

The MOA includes Pre-Transition Agreements and Activities as well as Post Transition Agreements and Activities.

As of July 1, 2023, all of the Extended Day (before school, after school, vacation programming and summer programming) will live under the Recreation Center.

Ms. Sibbing-Dunn made a motion to approve the Extended Day MOA, which was seconded by Mr. Hiltz. The Members were polled and voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

This MOA needs to be signed and the Board of Selectmen will vote at their November 29th meeting.

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

-Bay State Textiles - October Rebate: \$666.00

Mr. Hiltz made a motion to accept this donation/rebates, which was seconded by Ms. Sibbing-Dunn. The Committee Members were polled and voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

**School Committee Addenda:** Chair Mazzola had none.

Ms. Stewart hopes that Town meeting supports the schools requests tomorrow night.

Ms. Sibbing-Dunn shared that the Middle School is having a play called *Treasure Island*, on Friday and Saturday at 7:00 p.m. She then wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Interim Chair Giblin said there have been conversations in the legislature regarding strikes. She would like to remind everyone that teachers unions, school committees and administrations all have one goal and that is to educate students. She said nobody is making record profits in the school system and hopefully we can work together to find a way to make sure everyone is paying their fair share.

Mr. Hiltz asked that the Town Meeting please support our Articles at Town Meeting, and have a great Thanksgiving. Mr. Hiltz sent his congratulations to our field hockey team on their incredible run this year.

**Executive Session:** Interim Chair Giblin informed that there would be an Executive Session for contract negotiations (strategy session).

Ms. Sibbing-Dunn made a motion for Executive Session at 10:08 p.m., which was seconded by Ms. Stewart. The Committee Members were polled and voted in favor 5-0.

**Adjournment:** Ms. Stewart made a motion for adjournment at 10:45 p.m., which was seconded by Ms. Sibbing-Dunn. The Members were posted and voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted:

Donna G. Doliner, Clerk  
Norwood School Committee