

**Town of Norwood
School Committee Meeting
School Committee Room @ Savage Educational Center
Hybrid
Wednesday, January 24, 2024**

A hybrid meeting of the Norwood School Committee was held on Wednesday, January 24, 2024. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. (The public is able to 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: Ms. Anne Marie Mazzola, Chair; Dr. Joan Giblin; 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; Mr. Matt Wells, Interim Director of Finance and Operations

Minutes: Ms. Stewart made a motion to approve the following minutes:
-January 10, 2024 (Business Meeting); and
-January 10, 2024 (Executive Session Meeting; and
-January 19, 2024 (Executive Session Meeting)
This motion 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:	\$1,865,574.63
-Accounts Payable:	\$ 18,442.17
	\$ 45,401.04
	\$ 23,245.44
	<u>\$ 204,079.84</u>
-Approved for:	\$ 2,156,745.12

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 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 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 (pre-register by calling the Superintendent's Office at 781-762-6804 or in person prior to the start of the meeting); and (2) Call the Superintendent's Office 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 Chair declared Public Forum closed at 7:07 p.m.

Appearances: ELE Update: Ms. Lisa Bourgeois, Director of ELE updated the Committee on ELE (using a power point presentation).

Areas of Focus:

-ELE Department Staffing:
-Director role and responsibilities;
-Teachers and Paraprofessionals;
-Teacher FTE growth

-ML Population:
-Increased over five years;
-Continuous growth;
-ML & FEL Students

ELE Director Role in NPS:

-Oversight of ELE Program supports and services for PK - Gr. 12;
-Oversee identification, assessment and programming for Multilingual Language Learners (MLLs);
-Coordinate, develop and implement ELE programming;
-Collaborate with ELPAC, building principals and district admins. on relevant ELE related issues including staffing, programming, service delivery minutes and teacher evaluations;
-Manage the submitting and monitoring of Title III and Title III 186 grant activities and apply for additional applicable funding opportunities;
-ELE general budget planning and implementation for PD opportunities, curriculum resources and technology software;
-Provide guidance and support for children who are experiencing homelessness

ELE Department Staff:

-Director - 1.0 FTE;
-ELE Teachers - 22.0 FTE; and
-ELE Paras - 2.3 FTE

Ms. Bourgeois shared the *ELE Teacher FTE Growth*; and the *ML Student Population Increase Over Five Years*.

Annual ML Student Population Growth (December '23 vs. December '22):

-The total number of ML students increased from 530 to 591, indicating a growth of 61 students;

- The group of recent arrivals to the US among ML students has notably increased from 162 to 271, showing a significant rise of 109 students;
- On the other hand, the number of Opt-Out students has decreased from 17 to 13, suggesting a reduction in students opting out of the program.

ML Students & FEL Students - 12-8-23:

- Former English Limited (FEL) Students are monitored for four school years once they are exited from the program;
- ELE teachers collect program updates two times per year from general education teachers.

There was an opportunity for questions and discussion following the presentation.

Dr. Giblin asked if Ms. Bourgeois asked if she anticipates a need for increased staffing as a result of the new arrivals to our community.

Ms. Bourgeois said there would not be an increased staffing need at this time as, primarily, we will take some time to get to know the students to figure out what their needs are. Ms. Bourgeois also informed that some students have chosen to stay in North Attleboro. She also added that some students will fall into the FELS category (Former English Limited Students).

Dr. Thomson agreed that additional staff was not needed right away, but reminded that Norwood will be receiving \$104 per day from the state for each student.

Ms. Bourgeois informed that we are legally required to have a K-12 ELE Curriculum. That work started in the Summer of 2022. There has been some recent discussion around finding some funding sources so she can get some of the teachers to meet after school to continue that work.

Ms. Bourgeois also updated that they have recently purchased *Elevation*, which is an amazing tool that takes all kinds of information and puts it all into one area. (Info from Aspen, Dibbles, Renaissance, etc.). Ms. Bourgeois thanked Steph Beaudoin in the Technology Department who was a big help with this.

Specialized Programs Update: Ms. Cimeno was here this evening to update the Committee on Specialized Programs. She said she has not expanded the number of strands, but have expanded the number of classrooms.

- Little Mustangs Preschool Academy (LMPA);
- Language Based Learning Disability Program- (LBLD) - Balch;
- Learning, Exploratory, Academic Program (LEAP); Oldham, Balch, CMS and NHS;
- Practical Application of Curriculum and Skills (PACS) - LMPA, Prescott, Oldham, CMS, NHS - expanding to Willett - Fall 2025;
- Pragmatic Learning Center (PLC) -Cleveland, CMS & NHS
- Teaching Academic & Social Curriculum (TASC) - Callahan, CMS & NHS
- Live, Engage, Achieve and Develop (LEAD) - Savage Educational Center

Ms. Cimeno shared current staff information:

- Special Education Teachers - 37 FTE's
- Specialized Program Teachers - 27 FTE's
- Paraprofessionals - 129.73 FTE's
- OT - 4.6 FTE's
- PT - 2 FTE's
- SLP - 10 FTE's
- Visually Impaired - .1 FTE
- BCBA - 4.0 FTE's
- Psychologist - 2.6 FTE's
- Team Chairs - 4.0 FTE's
- Assistant Directors - 2.0 FTE's
- Director of Student Services - 1.0 FTE

Ms. Cimeno shared enrollment statistics:

- Total Special Education Students - 933 (October 1st) (26.3%)
- Total Student enrollment in Specialized Program - 214 (23% of eligible students)

The Members had an opportunity for question and discussion at the end of the presentation.

Special Education Staffing Request: Ms. Cimeno requested 2.0 Paraprofessionals for the LMPA for two students that are transitioning to LMPA with significant needs.

Ms. Sibbing-Dunn made a motion to approve 2 FTE paraprofessionals, which was seconded by Ms. Stewart for discussion.

Ms. Cimeno said she is being proactive and is putting the paraprofessionals in place ahead of two anticipated arrivals with significant needs.

The Committee voted in favor 5-0.

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

- New arrival update:
 - Families will be moved to Norwood this week;
 - Most school aged students have chosen to remain in the previous school district;
 - We will have 13 students attending schools in Norwood;
 - State Reimburses \$104 a day for educational costs.
- New Arrivals:
 - Preschool - 1
 - Kindergarten - 2
 - Grade 1 - 3

- Grade 4 - 1
- Middle School - 5
- High School - 1

Dr. Thomson said Norwood will be able to transport the students and will not require additional staff.

-New High School SRO: Dr. Thomson announced that Officer John Rooney will be the new School Resource Officer at Norwood High School. He then thanked Officer Jamie Mahoney, the former Resource Officer, for all his dedication and service to Norwood and the Norwood Public Schools.

-MLK Day: Dr. Thomson shared some of the ways the Norwood students celebrated Dr. Martin Luther King Day, including doing some reading and listening to his speeches and actions. Some also thought about Dr. King's dream and their own dreams. Finally, some of the students thought about how Dr. King's work has impacted our lives today and will impact us in the future.

Budget: Budget Sub Committee Update: Ms. Stewart said the Members should have a copy of the agenda and the links to the materials from the last sub committee meeting that was on January 18th. Some of the items discussed are the items Ms. Cimeno just went over. Dr. Munoz attended and gave the sub committee an update on budgetary needs for curriculum assessment and professional development. This current year's budget for PD was approximately \$80,000 which was allocated between PD, conference registration, stipends and outside PD providers. Dr. Munoz is currently analyzing grants, money in the operating budget, different title funds and ESSER III funding that ends in September, 2024, to see how we can fund this area of PD in a different manner for 2025.

Ms. Stewart said that they spent some time with Dr. Munoz, Dr. Taylor and Ms. Cimeno talking about the long term goal of doing an equity based or needs based budgeting approach. There have been a number of challenges in the past and there will be challenges going forward. Now that the override pledge is over, we will need to have some conversations around this.

Ms. Stewart said there is a BBC Meeting scheduled for next Wednesday, January 31st at 6:30 p.m. The goal is to figure out and agree on what the parameters are for the FY25 Budget. The next Budget Sub Committee will be on February 1st.

Capital Outlay Requests: Chair Mazzola updated that there is a Capital Outlay Meeting on Tuesday, at 6:30 at the FinCom room at Town Hall and should be covered by NCM. She said there is nothing that we need to vote on and there is nothing the schools are bringing forward at this time.

Dr. Thomson said we have a 5-Year plan and Joe Kidd and Paul Riccardi are on that plan. Dr. Thomson said we will be looking to finalize and refresh but don't

expect a lot of changes. Dr. Thomson said we did not get to the Savage parking lot project this year and will need to add that to next year's projects along with the Cleveland parking lot. We are looking at a lab refresh at the High School for graphic arts; teacher desk tops refresh; network switches and access points (approx. \$160,000 - \$170,000). Dr. Thomson reminded that the schools come in the spring for technology because it aligns with the e-rate reimbursement. Dr. Thomson said we are looking for Mr. Kidd and Mr. Riccardi to bring their requests to the School Committee at a meeting in March.

Old Business: Long-Term Agenda Review: The Chair said if anyone has an item that needs to be discussed now they could bring it forward. She reminded that meeting agenda discussions can be off-line for future items.

Ms. Stewart asked that the SC Meeting keep the agenda light for February 7th as there may be items added for the Superintendent Search. She added that if Mr. Wells is ready for the quarterly report on February 7th we should keep that. Ms. Stewart asked that we begin the discussion around the Strategic Plan on February 14th if possible. She added that there are a couple of things scheduled for March that may need to be bumped to April: (1) review of Facilities MOU; and (2) look at the Shared Cost Allocation Agreement. She reminded that we need to circle back to the issue around the Compensated Absences Fund. She also reminded that usually around February we update our School Committee Handbook so it's ready for anyone running for School Committee.

Ms. Stewart said we need to notify the Food Services Contract that it is time to begin negotiations. She said we need to notify them that we want to renegotiate or the contract rolls over as of July 1st. Also, Ms. Stewart said that some concerns were raised in the last Budget Workshop around the Elementary Principals and she would like the information around that shared with the Committee at some point in whatever way the Superintendent feels appropriate.

Dr. Giblin asked that we move the Strategic Plan to March 6th. She would like to make a proposal that we ask our Administration Team to bring forward 2-3 things that are in our current plan forward for the following year as a bridge plan to give the new Superintendent time to settle in. The one-year Strategic Plan keeps things going, but Dr. Giblin feels we need heavy input from the Central Administration Team.

Sheriff's Task Force Update: The Chair updated that she attended the recent meeting on Monday (virtual) and she sent the materials to the Committee

A Social worker for Brookline Police Department had a nice presentation around domestic violence, PTSD and trauma.

The Chair also updated on a program (*Are You OK?* phone line) that checks in with phone calls to elderly residents daily

The Chair said they also welcomed Eddie the comfort dog.

Interface Referrals Report: Ms. Stewart updated on the William James College Interface Reference Services.

Number of Cases Since the Service began on 11/1/18: 444

Reporting Period:

6/1/19 - 11/30/19	47
12/1/19 - 5/31/20	50
6/1/20 - 11/30/20	34
12/1/20 - 5/31/21	41
6/1/21 - 11/30/21	52
12/1/21 - 5/31/22	46
6/1/22 - 11/30/22	46
12/1/22 - 5/31/23	55
6/1/23 - 11/30/23	45

The number one way residents are reporting they are hearing about the program are through the schools.

There have been more residents with Mass Health / Medicaid reaching out.

Ms. Stewart asked the schools and towns to continue to find ways to get the information out around this program.

For anyone who would like to reach out, the phone number is 888-244-6843.

Dr. Taylor said in the training, staff are getting the resource guide and are hopefully sharing this information to those who may need it.

Student Services Review RFP Timeline Update: Dr. Taylor shared the timeline which has been elongated. She said they are hoping for a March 8th release of the RFP, She is hoping that the first draft is completed by February 26th. Dr. Taylor said the reason they had to elongate the timeline is because they are making this a collaborative effort and the Department Chairs and Directors need time to do research and pull information together. Dr. Taylor said the RFP has to be out for about 4-6 weeks.

The Members had an opportunity for questions and some discussion.

The Chair reminded that this is a fluid process and wanted to keep the public updated.

Superintendent Evaluation - Process: Dr. Thomson said he sent the Committee a memo today and said he has not been able to do some of the evaluation process that he has had to do as he has been deeply involved in all the work going on. He said that the good news is that he has found a Coordinator for the CFCE Grant that will be able to begin on Monday. He said that with all the work going on in the District and

all the work the Committee has to do on-boarding a new Superintendent, he recommends pausing the process at this point.

Ms. Sibbing-Dunn made a motion to approve the request to change the process that was committed to around the Superintendent's Evaluation, which was seconded by the Chair.

There was some confusion and discussion around the rating of the Superintendent.

Mr. Hiltz clarified that if they do not do the process to get a new rating, the prior year's rating will roll over.

Dr. Giblin made a friendly amendment to strike the last sentence in Dr. Thomson's memo to be clear that the Committee is suspending the evaluation.

Ms. Sibbing-Dunn accepted the friendly amendment.

Mr. Hiltz seconded the amended motion.

Ms. Stewart thanked Dr. Thomson for his memo and for agreeing to work on the transition plan. She agrees that looking forward, the transition will be taking up a lot of his time and the administrators' time. She said she did not feel comfortable not doing something she was elected to do, but if the majority of the School Committee votes in favor, then she will accept it.

Ms. Stewart shared her concerns around the goals and whether they would continue without Dr. Thomson's evaluation being done.

Regarding the motion on the table, the Committee voted in favor 4-1 (Ms. Stewart voted against).

Policy: Policy Sub Committee Update: Policy JLCA Revision: Ms. Sibbing-Dunn updated that the sub committee met on Tuesday and was able to loop back about JLCA. Mrs. Driscoll, Norwood's head nurse, edited the policy to reflect what our current practice is. There was a question about how that differentiates from what is recommended by MASC and Mass. General Laws. Mr. Longley said he did not have any substantive changes to the language. The recommendation from the sub committee is to accept those changes (but not looking for a vote this evening) and to also consult with counsel around the law to be sure we are covered.

Chair Mazzola said they will get the Committee a clean copy of the updated policy and will send to Attorney Murray for review.

Dr. Giblin suggested including "as mandated by the Department of Public Health Regulations" into JLCA, which is a little broader.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 6th and Joe Kidd will be meeting with the sub committee to discuss some technology policy updates.

New Business: None.

Consent Agenda: Acceptance of (0) Donations: None.

At 8:55 p.m., Mr. Hiltz made a motion to take a short recess (until 9:10 or until Mr. Hardy arrives), while they wait for Mr. Hardy of MASC to arrive for an update, which was seconded by Dr. Giblin. The Committee voted in favor 5-0.

The meeting resumed at 9:01 p.m.

Superintendent Search Update (Finalists Announced): Mr. Hardy, of MASC, was here this evening to announce the three finalists from the Superintendent Search and to share the next steps and timeline.

Mr. Hardy began by saying that all the candidates said the Search Committee represented Norwood very well and they were very respectful and worked well together.

The Members received, in their packet, a memo from the Search Committee informing that they voted unanimously to submit the following names forward for interview:

- Dr. John J. Buckey - Deputy Superintendent of Schools, Marblehead Public Schools;
- Timothy Luff - Deputy Superintendent of Schools - Natick Public Schools;
- Priya Tahiliani - Superintendent of Schools - Everett Public Schools

Mr. Hardy read the memo into the record.

Mr. Hardy reviewed the timeline going forward, saying that each candidate will visit Norwood on Thursday, February 1st. They will each visit a school and then will switch until each candidate has visited all three schools. The schools will be the Coakley Middle School, Prescott Elementary School and Balch Elementary School. At 4:00 p.m. the candidates will go to the High School. The Principal set up three different spaces for the candidates to rotate and meet with:

- students in one meeting space;
- parents in another meeting space; and a
- members of the community in the third space

All three groups will see all there candidates over a couple of hours. Mr. Hardy said an on-line survey has been set up for people who participate in the site visits to be able to share their thoughts. People will receive a QR code they can take

a picture of with their phone and the survey will pop up. The surveys should be done by 3 p.m. on Monday.

Mr. Hardy informed that the interviews will be on Saturday, February 3rd at the Savage Educational Center (School Committee Room):

-10:30 a.m. - Ms. Priya Tahiliani

-11: 40: a.m. - Mr. Timothy Luff

-12:50 p.m. - Dr. John Buckey

Mr. Hardy said that there will be a snow day scheduled for Tuesday, February 6th beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the same order.

At the School Committee Meeting on February 7th, the Members will deliberate and vote on the next Superintendent.

There was some discussion around the interview process and questions.

Ms. Sibbing-Dunn thanked Mr. Hardy for his guidance in this process. She said that she will have Mr. Kidd add the three candidates and their resume's to the website.

Mr. Hiltz said there was a very strong candidate pool and it will be a tough decision in a good way.

Mr. Hiltz made a motion to dissolve the Search Committee, which was seconded by Ms. Stewart. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

The Members thank Mr. Hiltz and Ms. Sibbing-Dunn for all of their hard work in this process.

School Committee Addenda: Mr. Hiltz had none.

Ms. Stewart had none.

Ms. Sibbing-Dunn had none.

Dr. Giblin thanked the Search Committee and from first glance at the packet she thought it looks like they did a thorough and wonderful job.

The Chair thanked the Search Committee on all their hard work and attention to detail.

Executive Session: Chair Mazzola informed that there would be an Executive Session for a Union Contract Negotiations Strategy Session.

Mr. Hiltz made a motion for Executive Session at 9:36 p.m. which was seconded by Ms. Stewart. The Members were polled and voted in favor 5-0.

Adjournment: Mr. Hiltz made a motion for adjournment at 10:48 p.m., which was seconded by Ms. Stewart. The Members were posted and voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted:

Donna G. Doliner, Clerk
Norwood School Committee