

NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS

**School Committee
Business Meeting**

Monday, January 4, 2021

6:30 PM

SC Packet Checklist: **SC Business Meeting Agenda 1-4-2021**
 SC Meeting Agenda Notes 1-4-2021
 Draft Response to MASC & MASS Letter to Governor Baker

Newburyport Public Schools
Newburyport, MA
School Committee Business Meeting - **REMOTE**
AGENDA
Monday, January 4, 2021
6:30 PM

The Mission of the Newburyport Public Schools, the port where tradition and innovation converge, is to ensure each student achieves intellectual and personal excellence and is equipped for life experiences through a system distinguished by students, staff, and community who: - practice kindness and perseverance - celebrate each unique individual - value creativity; experiential, rigorous educational opportunities; scholarly pursuits; and life-long learning - provide the nurturing environments for emotional, social, and physical growth - understand and embrace their role as global citizens.

Business Meeting Agenda: The listing of matters is those reasonably anticipated by the Chair which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law. **SPECIAL NOTE:** This meeting will be held remotely and will be televised locally live on Comcast Channel 9 or via <https://ncmhub.org/share/channel-9/>.

1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance
2. Public Comment – *remote via Zoom*
3. *Consent Agenda (warrants) – *Possible Vote*
4. NHS Student Representative Report
5. School Committee Retreat – *Vice Chair Bruce Menin*
6. Draft Response to letter from MASC & MASS to Governor Baker – *David Hochheiser*
7. Superintendent's Report – *Superintendent Sean Gallagher*
Flu Shot Vaccination Update, COVID-19 Update, and School Surveillance Testing
8. Sub-Committee Reports (if needed): Joint Ed; Finance; Policy; Superintendent's Evaluation

Organizational Meeting Agenda:

9. *Viva-Voce Vote for 2021 Vice-Chair, *Possible Vote*
10. Operating Principles (*review at Retreat*)
11. Norms of Interaction (*review at Retreat*)
12. MA State Ethics (*review at Retreat*)

Adjournment

The School Committee reserves the right to call **executive session, as provided under Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(2), of the General Laws to discuss strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations collective bargaining and/or potential litigation.

**Newburyport School Committee
Meeting Agenda Notes**

Monday, January 4, 2021

Time: 6:30 PM

Meeting will be held remotely via Zoom

AGENDANOTES

The listing of matters are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.

SPECIAL NOTE: *This meeting will be held REMOTELY and will be televised locally live on Comcast Channel 9 or via <https://ncmhub.org/share/channel-9/>.*

Agenda:

2. Public Comment – remote via Zoom
3. *Consent Agenda – (warrants) – *Possible Vote*
4. NHS Student Representative Report – *Sierra Leahy*
5. School Committee Retreat discussion – *Vice Chair Bruce Menin*
Planning and discussion of the School Committee Retreat scheduled for 6:30PM on Tuesday, January 19, 2020.
6. Draft Response to letter from MASC & MASS to Governor Baker – *David Hochheiser*
Enclosed in the packet is Sheila Spalding's proposed amendments to the draft letter.
7. Superintendent's Report
Flu Shot Vaccination Update: DESE requires student flu vaccinations for all school districts. The Superintendent will provide an update of the district. Massachusetts has extended the student flu vaccination requirement to the end of February.

COVID-19: current update for the district will be provided

School Surveillance Testing: The district is currently working with Cataldo Ambulance Service, CIC Health and the Board of Health in developing surveillance testing for staff and students in the upcoming weeks.
8. Sub-Committee Reports (if needed): *Joint Ed; Finance; Policy; Superintendent's Evaluation*

Organizational Meeting Agenda:

9. *Viva-Voce Vote for 2021 Vice-Chair, *Possible Vote*
10. Operating Principles (*review at Retreat*)
11. Norms of Interaction (*review at Retreat*)
12. MA State Ethics (*review at Retreat*)

Adjournment

*Possible Vote

FYI: Upcoming Dates:

City Council & School Committee Budget meeting – January 12 at 7PM
SC Retreat–Tuesday, January 19 at 6:30pm

(Draft Letter)

December 15, 2020

Re: Joint 12/8/2020 letter to Governor Baker

Dear Mr. Koocher, Ms. Davis, Dr. Scott, Dr. Baldwin:

As elected members of the Newburyport School Committee, we are writing to express our concern with the communication you sent to Governor Baker regarding his messaging about the pandemic's effects on schools and the appropriateness of coming back to full, in-person schooling. We are not concerned with your disagreement over his assessment about schools' safety or with his style of messaging. Instead, we are writing to point out that your call for controlled logic and collegial planning turned into a deeply divisive statement that we feel is inappropriate and counter-productive.

Of all people, you ~~should~~ know that schools and school systems only operate at their peak when the families, the school committee, school leadership, teachers, and ~~in an ever-increasing way~~ the state are all working together. Instead of pointing out this need for full unity, though, your letter both calls out teachers' unions as being "often the primary obstacle" and the Governor for not being strong in his calling out the unions. Adding layers to the already existing amount of blame and confusion that surrounds what's best for student and faculty health, and teaching and learning within schools' initial reopening and continued operational plans is not going to help. ~~You shouldn't have included T~~his second piece of your letter, regardless of whether or not you believe it's true, ~~was unnecessary~~.

Building relationships across all of these groups takes time, sincerity, and collaboration. As leaders of MASC and MASS, you ~~should have spent this~~ ~~had a~~ very public moment ~~to lending~~ Governor Baker some suggestions about building capacity for teamwork and getting everyone to a functional and transparent operational discussion. This is the most irregular and confusing moment of modern public education. Hopefully, we'll never have to experience anything like it again, ~~either~~. To believe that we can get through this without the trust that comes from sincere communication and collaboration is unfortunate and not the leadership we all need.

Furthermore, some of the issues and the rare and even singular events you mention, such as the calling of no confidence votes, clearly rest on long-festering issues that are bigger than this year's work. They do not represent what's going on in the majority of the state, and are really none of our business. Even though bringing up outlier behavior may seem like strong political rhetoric for your point, we don't feel that doing so is productive.

In the future, please keep in mind that the majority of the state's districts strive to act collaboratively with all of our communities' stakeholder groups, which includes the teachers' unions, even during the times when we find it difficult to find consensus. We are asking that in the future, when you make public statements to the Governor or otherwise, that you remember

that you're writing on our behalf and therefore do so with collaboration instead of division in mind.

Sincerely,
The Newburyport School Committee