

NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUSINESS MEETING
Senior/Community Center, 331 High Street, Newburyport, MA 01950
Monday, October 23, 2023

Present: Mayor Sean Reardon, Sarah Hall, Juliet Walker (6:48 pm), Bruce Menin, Brian Callahan, Steve Cole and Breanna Higgins

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Mayor Sean Reardon called the School Committee Business meeting of the Newburyport School Committee to order at 6:30 PM. Roll call found all members present, except Juliet Walker who arrived at 6:48 PM. All those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance. At this point in meeting, Sarah Hall took over.

PUBLIC COMMENT: none

STUDENT RECOGNITIONS: Superintendent Gallagher introduced students in grades 4-10, who received a perfect score on at least one section of the 2023 ELA, Math, or Science MCAS test. The students were awarded a certificate for Academic Excellence as follows:

Grade 4 ELA: Noah Dutcher

Grade 5 ELA: Soraya Boisvert

Grade 7 ELA: Quinnlan Fenn, Abigail Moriart, and Audrey Roebuck

Grade 8 ELA: Logan MacKnight, Colin Curran, and Madison Butler

Grade 10 ELA: Alexandra Hillger

Grade 8 Math: Andrew Hall, Calvin Eaton, Maxwell Macarone, and Noah Tarkan

Grade 10 Sci/Biology: Madeleine Jackman, John Murray, Charlotte Zeller, Parker Harding, Sofie LaFranchise, Mollie Smith, Alexandra Hillger, Beck Andreliunas, Kyle Lisauskas, Molly Grant, and Andrew Hall

STAFF RECOGNITION: Nock Middle School Principal, Nick Markos, recognized educator Kyle Hildebrand for his professionalism, dedication and commitment in the school and especially for his work with teacher leadership.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Warrants:

Motion:

On a motion by Brian Callahan and seconded by Steven Cole it was

VOTED: to approve, receive and forward to the City Auditor for payment the following Warrant:

Warrants (8101 & 8102 & A) \$886,132.06

Motion Passed

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT: NHS student, Theo Roberts, provided the student report that included news from the Bresnahan, Molin, Nock and High School (attached).

MCAS 2023 PRESENTATION:

Supt. Sean Gallagher, along with the four building principals, presented a district overview of the Data Report, which summarized the results of the 2023 MCAS testing. Details can be found here:

<https://www.newburyport.k12.ma.us/cms/lib/MA50010879/Centricity/Domain/20/2023%20MCAS%20report%2010.30.23.pdf>

Testing Requirements

Students in grades 3-8 take English Language Arts (ELA) and math tests every year, grades 5 and 8 take the Science and Technology/Engineering test, grade 9 takes Biology, and grade 10 takes ELA and math. DESE provides the individual student reports, which schools mail to Parents/Guardians in early October.

Each principal shared areas they would like to work on.

Juliet Walker would like to challenge the district to compare itself to similar districts when presenting MCAS data.

Rupert A. Nock Leadership Program Overview

Nock Middle School Principal, Nick Markos, presented an overview of a Student Leadership Summit that was held on October 18, 2023 in partnership with Teen Truth. Principal Markos shared the theme of the day, leading message, goals of the day, as well as various activities that the students completed. The event was very successful in bringing a group of diverse students together, and Principal Markos already sees a change in the students.

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES:

Finance Subcommittee:

Brian Callahan stated the committee met on October 12th, which included continued discussions around Athletic fundraising. *Vice-Chair Hall* remarked that she is glad Brian is taking on the Fundraising Advisory Committee, and hopes to see training for coaches on fundraising. *Steve Cole* commented that athletics should be funded properly so coaches don't have to find ways to get money to run.

Policy Subcommittee:

Juliet Walker reported Policy Sections I and J will be reviewed at their next meeting on October 30.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT:

Superintendent Gallagher reported on the first Safety Drill & Training event held on Saturday, October 21st at NHS with the Newburyport Police, Fire and EMT departments. The drills went well and cooperation between all of the organizations was impressive.

NEW BUSINESS:

Juliet Walker said she attended a meeting where lack of crossing guards was discussed and also the expansion of the Walk & Ride program.

The November 6th School Committee Business meeting will be at the Newburyport High School Library at 6:30 PM, due to the election set up at the Senior/Community Center.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion:

On a motion by Sara Hall and seconded by Brian Callahan it was

VOTED: to adjourn the Business meeting of the Newburyport School Committee at 8:27 PM.

Motion Passed

City of Newburyport

School Committee Business Meeting

Newburyport Senior Center, October 23rd, 2023

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Student Representative Report by Theo Roberts

Thank you Mrs. Hall, and good evening. Here are the latest updates from the Bresnahan, Molin, Nock and High Schools.

Bresnahan:

Students at the Bresnahan Elementary School now have another game to play at recess with the opening of a new “Gaga Ball” Pit. Gaga Ball is a very accessible and simple game that all Bresnahan students now have access to. I’d like to thank George Goich, an NHS Student, for dedicating his time and resources to the construction of this ball pit as one of his Eagle Scout projects.

In the Science department, Mass Audubon visited 3rd grade students as a part of the Unit on Animal Adaptations. In particular, students learned about our local Owl populations--their behaviors and adaptations--and even had a chance to dissect an owl pellet.

There was another owl opportunity at the Bresnahan with our Kindergarten students, who got the chance to experience live owls through the “Windows on Wildlife” program. Many thanks to the PTO for sponsoring this program.

In other news, the Bresnahan school had their dedicated Safety Week last week, with a school-wide assembly and morning discussions about emotional safety and coping strategies. The goal of the program is to make the Bresnahan a safer place by working together on important emotions.

Lastly, early literacy screening results will be sent home this week from the assessment held a few weeks ago. Students at the Bresnahan are tested per Massachusetts state regulation 603 CMR 28.03(1)(f), which requires all public schools to assess the reading skills of students in grades K-3 at least twice a year. The data from this screening will be used to determine each individual student’s risk for reading difficulty and to provide a guide as to how to provide intervention and support.

Molin:

We'll now move on to the Low Street schools, starting with the Molin. The Similarity Awareness Program will return to the Molin this year. This Molin will conduct various activities and discussions at first to get students thinking about the similarities that everyone shares, including those with disabilities. Northeast Passage, a nonprofit from Durham, NH, is bringing in wheelchairs and accessories to teach the students about how impaired students can still be included in sports or games.

4th Grade students will have quite the experience this week with exotic and unique animals from the "Curious Creatures" organization. Their professional exhibitors will teach respect and appreciation for these animals through a variety of hands-on presentations, which include interesting facts about the animals and their habitats.

This past Friday, the PTO hosted the annual Molin Pasta Night and Clipper Pride Rally. Families with younger students went to the Molin cafeteria for pasta, deserts and games before heading to the High School to cheer on the football team.

Lastly, the Molin School Adjustment Counselors Maggie Flaherty and Siobahn Green are running two awareness campaigns this month. The first is the Bullying Prevention Unit, being taught to all fourth and fifth graders. There are 4 lessons assigned to each student, along with a virtual classroom with resources for students and educators. Ms. Flaherty and Ms. Green have also posted a virtual classroom created by The Learning Nest to raise awareness about Dyslexia in our schools.

Nock:

At the Nock Middle School, students have begun to prepare for their own student-led conversations. Students and advisors are working together to gather information such as academic grades, i-Ready baseline data and MCAS scores to support these conversations. Students are using their advisory time to build their own story around this data, as well as how they personally think their year has gone so far.

The 7th Grade field trip program has also begun. Students visited Maudslay State Park for a science scavenger hunt, went Kayaking in the Merrimack River, and ventured down to the Sandy Point Reservation to test water salinity levels.

Lastly, 45 Nock students attended a two hour leadership summit led by JC Pohl from Teen Truth. At this meeting, students discussed the challenges that they face both in and out of school, and the possible solutions that they could use to develop an action plan.

High School:

Finally, we have some news from the NHS. Athletic teams have continued to excel in the fall season. A big congratulations to our athletes, coaches, trainer and athletic director on earning yet another Dalton Award for their accomplishments last year. The Dalton Award recognizes athletic programs with the largest winning percentage across all sports in a school year. This is the third year that our High School has won this award.

Speaking of athletics, I'd like to congratulate our own NHS football team for their 42-0 victory at last Friday's homecoming game. Over half of the school participated in both the game and the dance afterward.

Lastly, I would like to recognize all of the seniors who are a part of Mr. LaChapelle and Mr. Hill's civics classes. Over the past few weeks, they have organized a sophisticated forum for Newburyport City Council and School Committee candidates. And of course, thank you to all of the candidates for their willingness to participate in these activities.

That is all from me this evening, I'll now turn things back over to Mrs. Hall. Thank you.