

NASHOBA REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

February 10, 2005

School Committee in Attendance: Nancy Fleming, Don Adams, Tricia Kelly, Chris Way, Cathy Giunta, Ellen Sturgis, Mary Beth Yentz, Ex-Officio Member Kristin Squires

Absent: Monica CampoBasso

Administration in Attendance: Michael Wood, Superintendent; John Antonucci, Assistant Superintendent of Business and Finance; Ken Tucker, Florence Sawyer School Principal; John Smith, Nashoba Regional High School Principal; Jeremy Roche, Nashoba Regional High School Assistant Principal; Patrick Perkins, Assistant Principal of both Rowlandson and Burbank Schools; Samuel Pawlak, Luther Burbank Middle School Principal; Sally Sullivan, Director of Teaching and Learning; Margaret Morgan, Hale Middle School Principal; Joel Bates, Florence Sawyer School Assistant Principal

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Fleming called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION

Ellen Sturgis made a motion to approve the minutes of January 27, 2005 as amended. Seconded by Tricia Kelly. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS.**

<u>WARRANT NO.</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
1048	01/31/05	VENDOR	24,592.00
1049	02/11/05	VENDOR	408,639.55
1050	02/11/05	BENEFIT	22,811.24
1051	02/11/05	PAYROLL	883,226.22

MOTION

Cathy Giunta made a motion to approve the warrants as detailed in the memo dated 02/09/05 and noted above. Seconded by Don Adams. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS.**

CORRESPONDENCE

Report from NESDEC – An enrollment update was presented from NESDEC that is a free service as part of our membership.

Governor's Budget – A copy of Governor Romney's FY2006 Budget, released on January 26, 2005, was distributed.

Total Number of School Hours – A chart compiled by the CASE Collaborative and comparing the number of school hours in surrounding districts was distributed.

School Attendance on Early Release Days – Students' attendances on early release days for 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 were distributed to be used to compare attendance on early release Wednesdays to early release Fridays.

Ms. Way arrived and asked that the Committee reconsider the minutes as she would like to add a sentence that notes she stated that if the district went to full day kindergarten, Pompositticut Elementary School will have space issues.

MOTION

Ellen Sturgis made a motion to reconsider the minutes of January 27, 2005 as further amended. Seconded by Tricia Kelly. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS.**

Student Petition Forwarded from Kathy Farrell – A student petition forwarded by Kathy Farrell, Substitute Teacher, was included in the packet. Students request that they have December 23rd off and return on January 2, 2006 from the December vacation so that they may help their families prepare for the holidays. In the FY2006 School Calendar draft, the 23rd is a half day and students return on January 3, 2006 as January 2, 2006 is a legal holiday.

Email from Johnna Doyle – An email sent from Ms. Doyle, Parent and Lancaster SAC member, praising Mr. Wood for listening to the parents and teachers as he developed the draft calendar for FY06 was distributed to all school committee members.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Wood discussed his Superintendent's Report for this week. The Budget Workshops will continue on February 15, February 17 and March 3, 2006. All meetings will take place at the high school in the media center at 6:00 p.m. The MASC Day on the Hill is scheduled for April 26, 2005. It was extremely helpful last year. The Superintendent's Report also discusses math competition results for students in the district as well as high school staff and student accomplishments. Nashoba Regional High School Principal Smith and Assistant Principal Roche along with Mr. Wood and Mr. Antonucci met with Superintendent Bill Callanan of the Minuteman Technical High School. At the meeting, they discussed the relationship among the two districts and how they can work together. In an effort to keep the district up to date on the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act, Mr. Wood's Superintendent's Report includes an article outlining the impact of this act on school improvement plans and the definitions of highly qualified teachers. The Superintendent's Report will be published on the nrsd.net website.

Ms. Fleming announced that the order of the agenda will be altered. The next agenda item will be New Business, Parent Appeal for Kindergarten Entrance.

NEW BUSINESS

Parent Appeal of Kindergarten Entrance Age

Mr. and Mrs. Tower filed a request to have Policy JE-R waived on behalf of their child who will be five on September 5, 2005; five days after the District's cutoff for kindergarten entrance so that he may attend Florence Sawyer Kindergarten in the fall of 2005. Mr. Wood stated that the policy was written with the input of guidance counselors at all levels. This policy allows the district to keep the grade age-range span down to two years for the most part and allows that the child will be 18 at the end of their public school education. Ms. Fleming, Ms. Kelly and Ms. Yentz spoke in support of keeping the policy without exception. Although there are a low number of appeals each year, if exceptions are made, it is thought that the number will increase. Mr. Adams and Ms. Way hoped that the School Committee could have some flexibility in the implementation of this policy.

MOTION

Don Adams made a motion to waive Policy JE-R in the case of Brian and Karen Tower's child so that he may enter kindergarten for school year 2005-2006. Seconded by Cathy Giunta. **VOTED AND DEFEATED. In Favor:** Don Adams, Chris Way. **Opposed:** Nancy Fleming, Tricia Kelly, Mary Beth Yentz, Ellen Sturgis, Cathy Giunta

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT continued

Math Task Force Mid-year Report

Ms. Sullivan, Mr. Tucker and Mr. Smith presented an overview of the work of the Math Task Force this year. This task force was created as a result of problems unearthed when the high school changed the sequencing of math courses. The presentation included four major areas: what is being done for this year's students, what is being done for next year's students, what is being done to change the culture and what is being done to follow-up and ensure the actions have been successful? The Math Task Force has addressed the following: recognized that Math coordination is a K-12 issue, coordinated the common middle school and high school course offerings (Accelerated Algebra I), defined the transition process for all students moving from grade 8 to 9, examined courses and recommended new texts where needed and reinstated job-alike work (Math teachers all working together) as essential to coordination of the Math program. Handouts, which included surveys of students and grade statistics, were then distributed to the committee. Similar data is to be presented next year. Curriculum issues were discussed, particularly the parity between eighth grade courses as they compare to the same courses at the high school. Eighth grade courses are not leveled as the high school courses are (although there is no Honors Algebra I course at the high school either) and in the future, the same book will be used for both. The value of the textbooks, new and old was discussed and Math Teachers Ms. Crowley and Ms. Scavone spoke in favor of the current Honors Algebra II book although a survey of students reflected that more students had a hard time understanding the book than understood it. Textbooks are selected after being piloted in schools and after researching what districts in the area are using. The high drop out rate of Honors Algebra II as compared to all other Honors classes was a concern. It is expected that due to actions taken by the Math Task Force that this will not be true in the future. Concern was also registered that the students who dropped out of the Honors Algebra class this year will not be challenged in the lower levels. It was also noted that the grades in the Honors Algebra II class seem to be skewed toward the bottom. Mr. Wood reminded the Committee that the value of student data is to inform change and that grades inform instruction. Members of the audience were invited to share their comments. John Stefos, a student at the high school, spoke concerning his experience this year when he dropped from the Honors Algebra II class to the accelerated level. He has achieved an A+ and is finding the course exceptionally easy. His parents have spoken to Mr. Smith concerning this and Mr. Smith recommends that he take Honors Geometry next year. Mr. Stefos created a chart comparing his class work from last year in Algebra I in eighth grade to his Accelerated Algebra II class this year. 46.5 of his assignments have covered review material, and 53.4% new material. Of 43 homework assignments, 23 covered new work while 20 were review. Ms. Jean Campbell of Stow stated that she liked what she heard this evening particularly that all assessments of math students will take place in the 8th grade. She was told that English Honors classes also have criteria for entrance and that parents may override any recommendation that the faculty may make. Pam Alison of Bolton stated that problems with math instruction do not all point to the change of course sequencing at the high school. There are still other issues to address. John Stefos then commented that many of the students in his Accelerated Algebra II class are having an easy year. The Committee has asked for grade comparisons in the Accelerated Math classes for years 03-04 and 04-05. Coordination and communication across all schools and grade levels will continue.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ex-officio Report by Kristin Squires

Ms. Squires updated the Committee on the high school activities. Students are looking forward to vacation. Latin students from all grades will be going to Greece and Italy for 11 days, leaving on February 17, 2005. The Krispy Kreme Drive is being organized by the Community Service Club. Money raised will purchase books to be sent to Ethiopia. In Music news, Joshua DeBenedetto has been named to the All State Chorus as a bass. The USAF Jazz Ambassadors visited the school on February 8th and the next student concert is scheduled for February 15, 2005. The Senior Class won the class play competitions. It is the first time that a class has won three years in a row. The National Honor Society

made valentines for the teachers and is collecting money for the tsunami victims at basketball games. The Student Council just ran “data match” matching students based on the results of a survey. They also surprised the teachers with cake and ice cream and made appreciation cards for each department. They are now beginning to organize the annual volleyball tournament which has had as many as 32 student/teacher formed teams. Best Buddies has a party on the early release day and meet weekly. All of the winter sports teams are doing well, particularly the Freshmen Girls’ Basketball team who remain undefeated.

Stow School Building Committee *by Chris Way*

The Committee met on February 7, 2005. They are focusing on obtaining an independent enrollment projection. The water and septic systems at Center were discussed to see if they may limit renovation of the Center School if it were to continue as the town’s grade 3-5 school. Pilot Grove apartment complex may be interested in possible sharing of a sewer and septic system with the school. An appraiser has been contacted to estimate the value of the Kane property. The next meeting is February 22, 2005.

Transportation Subcommittee *by Ellen Sturgis*

The Subcommittee met on February 2, 2005. They discussed options if the district had to go from a two tier bus routing system to a three tier and the financial impact on the cost of transportation since the low bidder was at a 2 tier level only. Because this is a multi-year contract and that the change may be necessary at a point in the future, it was decided to re-bid and the new Request for Proposals was posted on that day. The bids are to be opened on February 28, 2005 and the Subcommittee will report at the first meeting in March.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Snow Plowing and Removal Cost Update

Mr. Wood reported that there is approximately 36% or \$24,558 of the snow removal account remaining. Mr. Spratt will apply to MEMA for emergency funds of up to \$10,000 once the application process has begun. He does not foresee any problems with this account.

It was announced that after the Luther Burbank Middle School Improvement Plan, the meeting would be adjourned due to the inclement weather.

NEW BUSINESS

Luther Burbank Middle School Improvement Plan

Mr. Sam Pawlak, Principal of the Luther Burbank Middle School, and Mr. Patrick Perkins, Assistant Principal, presented the Luther Burbank Middle School School Improvement Plan 2005-2006. They discussed goals that have been accomplished, new goals and goals for future years. The new goals of the plan are: Goal #1) Climate and Safety – To develop a safe and friendly environment in which students will not only learn, but will gain respect and a sense of responsibility for themselves, others, their school and community. Goal #2) Curriculum and Instruction – To constantly refine our curriculum and to vary our instructional practices to best meet the needs of our students. Goal #3) To increase parental involvement through improved communication.

MOTION

Don Adams made a motion to continue New Business after 9:00 p.m. Seconded by Ellen Sturgis.
VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS.

Acceptance of School Improvement Plans

MOTION

Ellen Sturgis made a motion to accept the School Improvement Plans of the Nashoba Regional High School, the Florence Sawyer School, the Pompositticut/Center Elementary Schools, the Hale Middle School and the Luther Burbank Middle School. Seconded by Don Adams. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS.**

CITIZEN INPUT

None

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION

Chris Way made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Don Adams. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen McKinstry
Executive Assistant