

NASHOBA REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

October 05, 2006

School Committee in Attendance: Don Adams, Ellen Sturgis, Tricia Kelly (6:09), Brian Burke, Monica CampoBasso, David Horne, Mel Govindan, Cathy Giunta, Laura O'Neil

Absent:

Administration in Attendance: Michael Wood, Superintendent of Schools, George King, Assistant Superintendent for Finance, Ann Farrell, Nurse Leader

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Don Adams called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. in the Office of the Superintendent.

Mr. Adams called for a moment of silence in memory of the victims of the recent school violence tragedies.

APPROVAL OF THE WARRANTS OF OCTOBER 6, 2006

<u>WARRANT NO.</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
2720	10/06/06	VENDOR	\$ 406,741.02
2721	10/06/06	BENEFIT	\$ 56,545.22
2722	10/06/06	PAYROLL	\$ 994,351.99

MOTION

Cathy Giunta made a motion to approve the warrants as detailed in the memo dated 10/04/06 and noted above. Seconded by Brian Burke. **IN FAVOR:** Don Adams, Brian Burke, Ellen Sturgis, David Horne, Mel Govindan, Cathy Giunta, Monica CampoBasso **VOTED AND PASSED (7-0) UNANIMOUS**

APPROVAL OF THE September 21, 2006 MINUTES

MOTION

Ellen Sturgis made a motion to approve the minutes of September 21, 2006 as amended. Seconded by Brian Burke. **IN FAVOR:** Don Adams, Brian Burke, Ellen Sturgis, David Horne, Mel Govindan, Monica CampoBasso **OPPOSED:** None **ABSTAINED:** Cathy Giunta **VOTED AND PASSED (6-0-1)**

MOTION

Monica CampoBasso made a motion to amend the minutes of September 21, 2006. Seconded by Mel Govindan. **IN FAVOR:** Don Adams, Brian Burke, Ellen Sturgis, David Horne, Mel Govindan, Monica CampoBasso **OPPOSED:** None **ABSTAINED:** Cathy Giunta **VOTED AND PASSED (6-0-1)**

CORRESPONDENCE

- Update from Stow Building Task Force
- MASC Resolutions
- Statistical Data Sheet from John Smith, NRHS Principal
- MASC/MASS Joint Conference 2006 Delegate Manual
- Parent correspondence regarding school security
- Article from The Associated Press regarding school security
- Email from committee member Tricia Kelly with information she received from Panny Gerkin regarding School Committee representation
- Letter from Stephen Cullinane, Nashoba Regional Education Association president regarding Power School Advisory Committee and Reporting to Parents Policy

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT (This report is available on the District website at www.nrsd.net)

NASHOBA Grade 10 Scores

Mr. Wood reported that Nashoba Regional School District has made significant gains in student performance in mathematics and is almost twice the state's performance level for Above Proficient. He told the committee 90% percent of the Grade 10 students scored at the Proficient or Above Proficient level marking a first since taking part in the statewide Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment system (MCAS). Seven (7%) percent are in need of improvement while four (4%) percent of our students are in the warning/failed category for mathematics. Mr. Wood said the District has been focusing on math for the last three years and made two significant changes during this time that might be attributed to this rise in scores. One, he said, is that we now teach Algebra II to most all freshman and Algebra I is now taught to most of the eighth grade students in our district. Although he said it is too early to tell, but these two changes are noteworthy to watch as possible reasons for this increase in performance. Mr. Wood told the committee that the district will need to see this be maintained over time as the best indicator that these changes were a root catalyst for better performance.

Regarding English scores, Mr. Wood told the committee that they were very strong as well. He said eighty nine (89%) percent of our students were in the Advanced Proficient or Proficient range, nine (9%) percent were found to need improvement, and two (2%) percent were in the warning/fail category. Mr. Wood said that historically English has been the stronger course as a district and reported that overall, the district did better than the State in all four performance categories.

NASHOBA Makes AYP (Adequately Yearly Progress)

Mr. Wood reported that Nashoba Regional School District made adequately yearly progress (AYP) as determined by the Massachusetts Department of Education. He said the determination is based upon a formula including MCAS scores, percent improved, and attendance. Mr. Wood told the committee and those in attendance that the formula looks at school and the district in the aggregate (all together) and by sub group. He said there are eight subgroups. Additionally, Mr. Wood said that based on our recent report card all of the schools made adequately yearly progress, while we did not make it for 2006 in special education for English Language Arts for grades three through five and for mathematics in grades six through eight. He said that because AYP is calculated over more than one year it is possible to have scores dip one year but not the next and still make adequately yearly progress Mr. Wood said that each of our schools review their individual MCAS results by school and by teacher during an early release afternoon when they have the time to use Testwiz, an analysis software package, and can review the breakdown by any category they desire. He told the committee that if they would like more information they could go to the District report card at www.doe.mass.edu and look under the Accountability tab for School Profiles.

District's Annual Audit

Mr. Wood reported that Nashoba Regional School District is in the process of completing its FY 06 Audit. He said the auditing firm of Powers and Sullivan is working with the District to complete this past year's review. He told the committee they were in at the end of the year to complete field testing for grants and Federal programs and they will be returning the week of October 9th to finish up with the operating budget. He added that Mr. King, Assistant Superintendent of Finance will be working with the Audit Advisory Committee to oversee the finished audit and the actual report will be viewed by the full school committee in November. Mr. Wood said the first meeting of the Audit Advisory Committee is on October 5, 2006 at 5:00 p.m. at the Office of the Superintendent in the Emerson Building.

School Security

Mr. Wood reported on school security within the District. Mr. Wood told the committee the Nashoba Regional schools are in very good shape when it comes to a daily awareness of student and staff safety. He said the District has a crisis management plan in place, which was implemented in 2001, and is reviewed annually by building with staff and students (as appropriate) and local public safety officials. Mr. Wood said most of this plan deals with the safety and protection of the children, and how to communicate during an emergency situation so that children can stay safe. He said that each of the buildings is locked throughout the day and only one door is available for entry, and all staff are responsible for inquiring when a stranger appears in the hallways. Mr. Wood told the committee the District applied for a large grant last spring that would have funded a major upgrade of safety measures including electronic door openers, video surveillance equipment, and training for local public safety officials and better communication devices for

school personnel to speak with safety officials, but unfortunately that grant was not funded. He said the District is moving forward in taking steps to address electronic door openers for all of the schools and camera surveillance. Mr. Wood reported that the Mary Rowlandson Elementary School and Luther Burbank Middle School will be the first schools to install cameras and buzzers for their doors. He said next will be Nashoba Regional High School and then the District would follow through with the elementary and middle schools in Bolton and Stow. He told the committee all of the schools will have electronic door openers before the end of the calendar year, and said that in planning for next year the District would explore an identification card system for all faculty and staff that will also be used as an electronic key at one entrance. Mr. Wood said this system will probably have both the swipe card technology and use fingerprint technology to be sure that someone isn't falsely using someone else's card. In the meantime, we will continue to do what we have always done to maintain safety in our schools. He said that principals and secretaries currently monitor who comes through the main doors and custodians work to ensure that all doors are locked at all times, or supervised when open. Additionally, he said that faculty and staff welcome visitors and if they are unknown to them assistance is then offered to ensure that they find their way or are brought back to the main office. He told the committee that in the schools where Preschool classrooms are located, parents must wear a badge when they enter the school and all students are signed in or out by parents who are dropping them off and that they must stop at the main office to do this.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Ex-Officio Report by Ms. O'Neil

Ms. O'Neil reported to the committee that Spirit week would end the following day with the homecoming football game against Gardner and dance. She said that each day had a theme: Monday-pajama, Tuesday-monochromatic, Wednesday-New England sports, Thursday-college, and Friday-Nashoba spirit. Ms. O'Neil reported that this year, instead of students, staff members nominated students for the homecoming court, king, and queen based on their exemplary representation of Nashoba and that students would vote on the nominees to elect the court, king, queen, which will be announced at the dance following the football game.

Ms. O'Neil reported that the guidance department hosted a senior college planning night on Tuesday, October 3rd and held a senior parent coffee earlier in the day. Additionally, Ms. O'Neil told the committee guidance counselors spent two days talking to each senior English class about the college application and admission process, as the deadlines for early application are quickly approaching.

Other News: Ms. O'Neil reported-

- The Backpack drive ends tomorrow.
- The Varsity Math League has their first match on Tuesday.
- The girls' soccer team improved their record to 8-0-1. The boys' country team improved their record to 7-1.
- On Friday, October 13th three members of the executive board of student council will attend an officer shop.
- Ms. Sturgis also reported that Ms. O'Neil is the recipient of this year's DAR Good Citizen's Award and the committee offered its congratulations.

Facilities Subcommittee, by Ms. Kelly

Nothing to report.

Finance Subcommittee, by Ms. Giunta

Nothing to report.

Personnel Subcommittee, by Mr. Adams

Mr. Adams reported that the Personnel Subcommittee discussed strategies for negotiating and litigation in Executive Session.

Policy Subcommittee, by Ms. Kelly

Ms. Kelly reported that the Policy Subcommittee discussed the Reporting to Parents Policy and also the Fund Raising Policy draft which is included in the meeting's packet. Ms. Kelly told the committee that regarding the Reporting to Parents Policy, the Unit A Association representatives were present at their meeting and voiced objections to the time requirement for returning graded work to students. Ms. Kelly said that a statement was made which said that the passage of this policy would provoke a request for impact bargaining with the school committee. Committee member Tricia Kelly reported that one idea that the subcommittee discussed was the charging of a user fee for clubs and teams. A short discussion followed between Ms. Sturgis and Mr. Govindan as to how this would be proposed, given that the athletic user fee does not cover the entire cost of participation, only about 1/3 of it. Ms. Kelly answered that the subcommittee was aware that the athletics user fee only covers about 1/3 of the cost and that fact would cause a problem if a fee were to be charged for clubs, as there is usually no known cost up front. A brief discussion followed about the fact that the clubs/teams could possibly start fundraising at the start of the year and have a parent handle the funds which could be returned if not used.

Regarding the Fund Raising Policy, Ms. CampoBasso added that the Policy Subcommittee may look at recommending funding registration fees. Mr. Horne said that this amount should have a budget line item which showed this amount. Chair, Don Adams, asked the subcommittee when they expected to have a final decision on the Fund Raising Policy. Committee member David Horne responded that the Policy Subcommittee would set a deadline of next meeting to have the draft completed.

Tri-Town, by Mr. Adams

Mr. Adams reported on the recent Tri-Town meeting, held Tuesday, October 3rd. He told the committee Mr. Wood gave the District enrollment figures to the towns and there was much discussion regarding that topic. He also said that the issue of a regional middle school was discussed. Mr. Wood added that they are looking at putting together a committee in the next 60 days that would look at the needs of the District and get feed back from the community as well. He told the committee that Panny Gerkin had told him Bolton had a lot of success in receiving completed survey information when the surveys were sent out along with the census.

SPED PAC

Nothing to report.

Stow Building Task Force (SBTF), by Ms. Sturgis

Nothing to report.

NEW BUSINESS

Coordinated Health Program:

NRSD Nurse Leader Ann Farrell presented a PowerPoint presentation on the District's Coordinated Health Program. Ms. Farrell began her presentation with the quote "Children must be healthy to learn and learn to be healthy." Ms. Farrell went on to give the School Committee and those in attendance a brief overview of the program. She stressed the importance of the school Health Offices. A key point which Ms. Farrell noted was school Health Office visits, which totaled 12,000 for the 2005-2006 school year. Ms. Farrell told the committee the Health Task Force reviews District health education. She said they revise and develop curriculum guides for the K-12 health education program which is aligned with the MA Comprehensive Health Curriculum Frameworks. Ms. Farrell reviewed the District Coordinated Health Program curriculum. She told the committee about initiatives the District Coordinated Health Program is involved in, such as the Essential School Health Grant, automated external defibrillators, CPR instructors/staff trainings, Healthy Choices Grant, and the Health and Wellness Policy. Ms. Farrell also told the committee about the staff wellness program she has coordinated, which includes monthly newsletters, screenings and walking challenges.

Mr. Burke asked who may join the task force and Ms, Farrell responded that this task force is a combination of parents and staff. She added that requests for new members will be sent out soon via local newspapers.

School Committee Meeting Site:

Mr. Wood reported to the committee that he met with Anne Vantine of Stow Access T.V. regarding the SC Approved 10/19/2006

televising of School Committee meetings. He told the committee Ms. Vantine had asked if the committee could select a meeting site so that they could move forward with their plans to televise the meetings. Discussion ensued regarding this topic. Mr. Wood said his thought was that if the District were to invest in video equipment then it should be stored in one place and mentioned the high school stage as an option. Mr. Wood also said that if meetings were to be held at the high school then video equipment could be available for airing student plays and events. Mr. Horne asked about projected cost for video equipment and Mr. Wood said he thought it would be under \$20,000. Ms. Sturgis said she would prefer meetings to be in the Media Center as she could foresee scheduling issues should they select the high school stage area. Ms. Kelly agreed. Mr. Govindan asked about the Academic Support Center and Mr. Wood said that this space was smaller than his office and also there are a few groups who use this space regularly so that it would probably not work. David Horne said that he would rather look at taping the meetings because it would be less expensive. The issue of live feed availability for each town was discussed. Ms. Giunta commented that the issue of televising School Committee meetings should be a District issue, not an issue for the Town of Bolton. Mr. Adams told members of the committee he sees this as an opportunity for this to be offered as an integrated curriculum elective and that perhaps the cost could be absorbed that way. Mr. Burke agreed, but added that he still thinks this could be something the three towns could approach their respective cable companies with. Ms. Kelly commented that before the committee gets too involved with this issue she would like to see them agree on who owns it.

MOTION

Motion moved by Brian Burke that the School Committee agree in principal to the long term plan to meet in one location at the high school, contingent on funding, ownership, technology, and other details to be agreed upon by the School Committee and the member towns. Seconded by Mel Govindan.

IN FAVOR: Don Adams, Brian Burke, Mel Govindan, **OPPOSED:** Ellen Sturgis, Monica CampoBasso, David Horne, Tricia Kelly, Cathy Giunta **(3-5) MOTION FAILED**

Ms. Sturgis said she would like to see the committee think about this for one week. Ms. Giunta stated that the committee just keeps going around the same issues concerning this.

MOTION

Motion moved by Cathy Giunta to choose a place at the high school where the committee could potentially hold meetings and where the meetings had the potential to be broadcasted on each of the towns' cable channels. Seconded by Tricia Kelly. **IN FAVOR:** Don Adams, Ellen Sturgis, Brian Burke, Mel Govindan, Monica CampoBasso, David Horne, Tricia Kelly, Cathy Giunta **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (8-0)**

Mr. Wood mentioned the Warren Room in Stow as a short term meeting site and told the committee he would bring information regarding this to their next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

District Improvement Plan

Mr. Wood called the committee's attention to the District Improvement Plan which was included in the evening's packet. The committee reviewed the document and discussion ensued.

MOTION

Motion moved by Cathy Giunta to accept the revised District Improvement Plan and to change the School Committee Goals 1,4 to "Production of recommendation". Seconded by Mel Govindan **IN FAVOR:** Don Adams, Ellen Sturgis, Brian Burke, Mel Govindan, Monica CampoBasso, David Horne, Tricia Kelly, Cathy Giunta **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (8-0)**

Reporting to Parents Policy:

The Reporting to Parents Policy Draft 4 was reviewed. Ms. Kelly noted some typographical errors in the document and requested they be corrected. NRHS Science/Engineering teacher Al Fordiani addressed the committee regarding this policy. He told the committee that he would find it very difficult to get reporting done in the 10 day time frame stated in the policy. He said this would be particularly true when he has assigned a large report and added that he feared this would mean assignments would be "dumbed down" in

order for teachers to meet the 10 day time line. Mr. Wood stated that there would be obvious exceptions to the 10 day time frame and said that all teachers would need to do is to tell their students when an assignment was given that they would not be able to report back within the 10 days due to the size and volume of material involved. Luther Burbank Middle School English teacher Ruthann Bakun also voiced her opposition to the proposed policy and stated she and many teachers felt insulted by it. Ms. Bakun said it should be the responsibility of the building principals to make sure teachers are doing their job. Dan D'Amore, NRHS Science teacher, told the committee that as a teacher and parent he feels his responsibility is to teach students to be successful in college. He said he feels this policy takes that ownership away from the students and shifts it to someone else. Mr. Kevin Keaveney, Hale Middle School Social Studies teacher, spoke on behalf of the Unit A Association and said that the Association believes this policy would mean a change of working conditions and they have submitted a Request for Bargaining Impact. Mr. Wood again commented that the 10 day time frame could be extended by teachers when needed. Mr. Wood said that the committee would be looking at feedback over the school year from teachers regarding a time frame for reporting grades and that perhaps the timeframe would be revised next year after reviewing the feedback and learning from this year. Committee member Tricia Kelly stated that she did not see "dumbing down" assignments to be an option in meeting the 10 day reporting time frame. She said that the option to extend this time frame when needed has already been discussed and that this would be the appropriate course of action.

MOTION

Motion moved by Cathy Giunta to accept the policy as a second reading, Policy IKAB Reporting to Parents, dated September 27, 2006. Seconded by Ellen Sturgis **IN FAVOR:** Don Adams, Cathy Giunta, Ellen Sturgis, Tricia Kelly **OPPOSED:** David Horne, Brian Burke, Mel Govindan **ABSTAINED:** Monica CampoBasso **VOTED AND PASSED. (4-3-1)**

Mabel Hale Proposal

Committee member Ellen Sturgis presented the committee with a request for funding from the Mabel Hale Fund for the Hale Middle School Project Adventure Program. Ms. Sturgis said this funding was needed due to increased costs, which were mostly transportation related.

MOTION

Motion moved by Ellen Sturgis to accept the \$2,700. grant from the Mabel Hale Fund to support the Hale Middle School Project Adventure Program. Seconded by Cathy Giunta. **IN FAVOR:** Tricia Kelly, Cathy Giunta, Don Adams, Brian Burke, Ellen Sturgis, Monica CampoBasso, David Horne, Mel Govindan **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (8-0)**

CITIZEN INPUT

David Lindsay of Bolton told the committee that good government includes live telecasts of meetings like this one and the committee should move as quickly as possible regarding this issue.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION

Motion moved by Ellen Sturgis to move to Executive Session. Seconded by Cathy Giunta. **IN FAVOR:** Tricia Kelly, Mel Govindan, Don Adams, Brian Burke, Ellen Sturgis, Monica CampoBasso, David Horne, Cathy Giunta **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (8-0)**

Respectfully Submitted,
Linda DeStasi
Executive Assistant