

*Natick Public Schools  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES  
February 23, 2015*

The School Committee held a meeting on Monday, February 23, 2015 at 7:15 p.m. in the School Committee Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Town Hall. Chair Mistrot called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

Members Present: Tom Campbell, Dirk Coburn, Paul Laurent, David Margil, Amy Mistrot, Firkins Reed

Anne Blanchard arrived at 7:22 p.m.

Others present:	Peter Sanchioni	Superintendent of Schools
	Anna Nolin	Assistant Superintendent
	Liam Hurley	Director of Finance
	Timothy Luff	Director of Student Services
	James Araujo	Teacher Representative
	Sammy Ferrera	Student Representative
	Brandon Thornhill	Student Representative

### **Recognition of Middle School Math Team and Math Counts Advisors and Principals**

The School Committee recognized students, advisors and principals at the middle schools for the work they have done over many years to grow the math program and competitive teams. On Saturday, January 31, the Wilson Middle School Math Counts team participated in the Metrowest regional competition placing third and have qualified for the state finals to be held on March 7, 2015. Students and staff from both Wilson and Kennedy Middle School Math Teams were also recognized given the overwhelming success of the programs. Both programs have increased in size and in rankings in their leagues and Natick is becoming a force in the middle school math realm. Teachers Mark Baranoff, Marylou Randall and Christine Prusky (all coaches) were recognized. Dave Walker, Math Counts Coach was recognized and Katie Dewar (not present) was also recognized as a Kennedy Middle School coach. School Committee members and others present congratulated both schools for the accomplishments they have made in these programs.

### **Public Speak**

Chair Mistrot asked if anyone wished to come forward for Public Speak. No one came forward.

### **Global Competency Certificate**

Ms. Rose Bertucci discussed a new program being implemented at Natick High School, The Global Education and Citizenship Certificate (GECC). This program will help interested students cultivate the tools to practice citizenship and leadership skills in a global community. Through cross-cultural connections, proficiency in a foreign language, international travel, cultural experiences, service, classroom learning and technology, NHS students, who complete the GECC, will have gained a global perspective that helps them thrive in a multi-cultural and multi-lingual world. Ms. Bertucci reviewed the certificate requirements which included academics

(grade of C- or higher), international activities, community service, a resume, a summary and reflection of their experience. Advisors will be established who will oversee the students' activities and approve their certification. Ms. Bertucci responded to questions from the School Committee. The administration will update the school committee next year on the progress of the program.

### **Public Hearing on FY'16 Budget**

Chair Mistrot announced that the School Committee will now be entering the public hearing on the FY'16 budget. Mr. Coburn moved to open the public hearing for the FY'16 budget. Mr. Margil seconded. It was unanimously approved.

Dr. Sanchioni, Mr. Hurley and Dr. Nolin presented the FY'16 Budget. Dr. Sanchioni stated education is an investment, not an expense. He reviewed the following budget goals.

- Meet all mandated and fixed costs
- Appropriate negotiated COLAs
- Maintain all professional staff positions
- Add additional staffing positions needed to address high academic class sizes.
- Add additional staffing positions needed to provide mandated Special Education services across the District.
- Appropriate calculated increases in energy costs
- Appropriate calculated increases in transportation costs
- Meet all mandated costs associated with Special Education
- Educate the 5,400 students we serve daily to superior levels of achievement through high-quality instruction
- Education is an investment not an expense

The FY'16 Preliminary budget request is in the amount of \$55,362,217, a \$3,867,400 (7.5%) increase over FY'15.

The FY'16 Salary Budget request is in the amount of \$42,818,335, a 7.7% increase over FY'15.

Included in this request are a total of 26.1 staff additions:

15.6 FTE Classroom Teachers

8.5 FTE Pupil Services

2.0 Other

The FY'16 Expense Budget request is in the amount of \$12,543,882, an \$811,898 (6.9%) increase over FY'15.

- Major Expense Increases
  - Administrators' Requests                      \$ 143,268
  - Technology    \$ 243,955
  - Curriculum & On-Line Learning              \$ 230,663
  - Transportation                                        \$ 126,543
  - All Other     \$ 67,469

Dr. Nolin and Mr. Hurley discussed in more detail the makeup of the \$811,898 expense budget.

Dr. Sanchioni reviewed an enrollment chart showing how Natick Public Schools enrollment has increased over the years. There has been an increase of 894 students in 9 years. He projects an additional 129 students will be added next year.

Mr. Hurley reviewed the 5-year capital plan which is continuing to change:

- Repair Wet Roof at Wilson \$10,000
- Repair HVAC Units at Ben Hem \$13,000
- Replace Carpeting at Ben Hem (Library) \$20,000
- Replace Plumbing at Johnson \$175,000
- Modular Classrooms F/F (6) - Location TBD \$1,097,800
- Purchase Portable Radios & Equip \$162,000
- Purchase 15 Passenger Van \$65,000
- Replace Concrete at Main Entrance Wilson \$20,000

Total \$1,562,800

Dr Sanchioni also presented a level staff budget and a level service budget as follows:

**Based on the Current FY'16 appropriation: \$51,885,220**

<u>Level Staff (0 adds)</u>	<u>Level Service (13.1 adds)</u>	<u>Proposed (26.1 adds)</u>
\$53,409,411	\$54,340,059	\$55,362,217
<b>-\$1,524,191</b>	<b>-\$2,454,839</b>	<b>-\$3,476,997</b>

Dr. Sanchioni expects the deficit will be reduced by some adjustments in insurance and some other things the town is considering. These numbers will continue to be updated.

Dr. Sanchioni reviewed strategies to close the budget gaps:

- Additional Revenue Sources
  - ✓ State Aid
  - ✓ Chapter 70
  - ✓ Other Town Revenue (Capital)
  - ✓ Savings in Insurance (-12)
  - ✓ Move items to Capital
- Reduction in Shared Expenses
- Reduction to School Budget

Strategies to Close School Deficit

- Utilize Revolving Accounts
- Consider Raising Fees
- Reduce School Expense Accounts (\$250,000)
- Reduce non-instructional personnel
- Allocate remaining deficit to each school on per pupil basis for cuts to instructional personnel
- Review impact for program equity

Mr. Dennis Roche presented and spoke in detail on the FY'16 Technology Budget Request as follows:

<b>Operating Budget</b>			
Objective	FY15	FY16	Variance
Supplies	\$3,379	\$3,379	-
Equipment	\$20,000	\$20,000	-
Capital Equipment	\$254,138	\$414,527	160,389

AV	\$3,500	\$3,500	-
Purchase of Services	\$189,600	\$191,620	\$2,020
Software	\$117,000	\$117,000	-
LAN/WAN Maintenance	\$161,532	\$243,078	\$81,546
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$749,149</b>	<b>\$993,104</b>	<b>\$243,955</b>

Mr. Roche has requested one staff addition which is not in this budget – a software deployment specialist to deploy and test software as there is a need for a coordinated effort in this area. He stated that one of the biggest pain points is keeping up with the demands of deploying and testing of software to ensure success. This challenge becomes more difficult each year as the volume of devices now exceeds 6000 district wide. A variety of devices are supported, all of which have different requirements and vendor license agreements. There are currently 6 technicians.

Discussion on the FY'16 budget was held. Mr. Margil asked what the impact would be if there was a need to go with a level staff budget. Mr. Luff and Dr. Sanchioni discussed the impacts of the staffing requests if they were not funded – larger class sizes at elementary, particularly Ben-Hem and Brown, more class sizes over 25 at Kennedy, more sections with more than 25 students at the high school in English, Math, Science and Social Studies. Paraprofessional staff and teaching staff to satisfy IEP's are mandated, case loads for guidance counselors at Kennedy/Wilson would increase, case load for nurses Kennedy/Brown would increase, PACE Program could not continue without hiring the social worker – previously funded by Metrowest Health Grant. The District will save money hiring an Assistive Technology Specialist vs. contracting this work out.

Mr. Margil stated that the FEIP positions and the KEIP positions do provide direct instruction and are really important to the elementary school experience and would hate to see these positions eliminated. Is it possible to look at utilizing some of the funds in revolving accounts that have a high balance such as ASAP and still keep the program viable? Dr. Sanchioni indicated that there are laws that require funds raised for that account must be spent on that account, however, there are some costs that may be offset that they will look into.

Mr. Campbell, as he has stated before, views the Natick Public Schools as an economic engine. He asked how many Natick Public School employees reside in Natick. Mr. Hurley will follow up. He also asked how many students have worked in the community as a result of their education in web design or who have used their skills working during the summer for the Technology Director. This information may be helpful going forward when asking the public for assistance.

Mr. Campbell is very suspicious on increasing fees particularly since we are asking parents to potentially contribute to their sons/daughters education by purchasing laptops. He believes increasing fees should be avoided at all costs.

Mr. Coburn asked if offering foreign language at lower grades is offered in any version of this budget. It is not and Dr. Nolin will speak to this in greater length at the next meeting.

Mr. Coburn would like to see other metrics added to the chart which compares per pupil expenditures with other towns such as per capita property valuations, per capita income, per capita state aid.

Mr. Coburn pointed out that in the Staffing Summary in the budget book, there are three areas where the staffing has grown significantly: Nurses, medical & therapeutics services and paraprofessionals. What has driven these increases? Dr. Sanchioni answered that with the increases in enrollment (900+ students in 9 years), there are more educational services needed. 15% of NPS student population are on IEP's. Many students have complex needs. Mr. Luff pointed out that there are 119 students that require specialized programs and it is

Natick's goal to keep these students in district with specialized programs rather than send them to out of district schools. A cost to send these students out of district would be approximately \$7.3M. Mr. Coburn stated that he has not ruled out increasing fees and thinks there is still a need for a discussion on reserves.

Ms. Blanchard made a general comment that if Natick's per pupil expenditures were raised up to meet the state average, the \$2.4M deficit for a level service budget would be made up. Natick has a lot of rich programming and in-district special education programs for many students at an affordable price – a cost lower than average across the state without cutting sports, arts or closing neighborhood schools. She stated that it is not mandated to have class sizes a certain size, however, she hates to see the district step backwards and have larger student: staff ratios. Ms. Blanchard would like more clarity on the uses of iPads in the district. Dr. Sanchioni indicated that a lot of structure is in place with the iPads and they are a key educational resource. He will share this information at a future meeting.

Ms. Reed stated that it is an understatement to say we are hard pressed to educate all students equitably and hopes the community understands the budget gaps we are experiencing. She pointed out that the administration is doing a remarkable job providing a great education on leaner and leaner budgets year after year, but a level staff budget is a real step backwards. She requested seeing a spreadsheet quantifying the impact of all of the potential staffing cuts. Ms. Reed stated that she is against raising fees, but this is a scary budget year and the classroom has to be valued above all. With overcrowded classes, an intangible issue becomes apparent - the morale of the staff and students.

Mr. Laurent stated that the growth in this town is scary. Each year ground is lost and is not going to be made up. Stark choices have to be made in both the school district and the municipality. The town is facing a deficit that will grow substantially. There is a need to look at a multi-year long term approach and to address the continued growing trend. Fees have to be looked at – everything has to be looked at.

### **Spring Warrant Articles**

Dr. Sanchioni discussed the Bus Subsidy Spring Warrant Article he is submitting. This item will come back to the next meeting with more detailed backup information.

### **Review of Fees**

Chair Mistrot passed out a survey of fees comparing Natick to other towns. This item will be discussed and reviewed at the next meeting. Requests were made:

- to see what the bottom line savings will be if fees were increased
- to understand the budgetary impact of adding parking fees at the high school
- include operational costs to administer these fee programs

Mr. Coburn moved to close the public hearing on the budget. Mr. Laurent seconded. It was unanimously approved.

### **Student Concerns**

Ms. Sammy Ferrera announced that the NHS Student Council is hosting their annual Blood Drive on Tuesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>. See the recent eblast for more details.

Mr. Brandon Thornhill announced that the Mr. Natick competition will be held on Friday night at 7:00 p.m. This talent show/competition is a fundraiser for the senior class. Please come and provide your support.

Mr. Campbell announced that the NHS Boys 4 x 4 100 Relay Team achieved State Championships in the State tournament and set another school record. Team members consisted of Lucas Holt, Myles Holt, Brian Dunlap and Brandon Thornhill. School Committee members congratulated these students.

### Teacher Representative Comments

Mr. Araujo extended his appreciation to the School Committee for the hard work they have put in on the budget and thanked them for recognizing that large class sizes has an impact on the teachers, and more importantly, on the students who recognize the difference between a class size of 24 and a class size of 32 - thank you for noting that.

### Approval of Donations

Mr. Hurley requested the School Committee's approval of the following donations:

<u>Source/Donation</u>	<u>Amount/Value</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
Mr. & Mrs. Alan Seymour	\$1,000.00	Student Activities - Robotics Club
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Mistrot	\$500.00	Student Activities - Robotics Club
Mr. & Mrs. Nelson Zide	\$20.00	Student Activities - Student Assistance Program - <i>In Memory of Lee Grady</i>
Mr. David Meier	\$250.00	
Mr. Thomas Blackadar & Ms. Paula Shakespeare	\$25.00	
Various	\$198.00	Donations to Natick Public Schools - <i>In Memory of Myrna Rosenthal Margil</i>
Mr. & Mrs. John Van Amsterdam	\$2,500.00	Student Activities - BPA
Mutual One Bank	\$100.00	Student Activities - DECA Club
Abt Associates, Inc	\$500.00	Principal's Discretionary at Lilja
Natick Education Foundation	\$31,257.00	Fall Grants - See Below for Detail

<b>Account Name</b>	<b>Grant Award</b>	<b>Teacher(s)</b>	<b>School</b>
Forever Friends	<b>\$1,000.00</b>	Mary Gavin	Ben Hem
NHS Goes to Space	<b>\$1,279.00</b>	Kristie Loncich	High School
Seed to Harvest: Living Lab	<b>\$4,000.00</b>	Ian Kelly for Krissy Fernandes	Ben Hem
Linking to Lilja's Literary Lot	<b>\$4,559.00</b>	MaryLynne Gyster	Lilja
Moveable	<b>\$1,270.00</b>	Rob Dombroskas	Brown
A Tour of Chinese Culture	<b>\$181.00</b>	Yu Lan Zhu	WL/KN
Grade 5 Band Books	<b>\$1,408.00</b>	Scott Morrill	Wilson
Audio Books	<b>\$1,900.00</b>	Kristin Stoetzel	Ben Hem
Citizen Scientist with Loree Griffin Burns	<b>\$2,060.00</b>	Amy Bloom	Wilson
Standing Up for Learning	<b>\$3,600.00</b>	Noel Vigue	Kennedy
Master Teacher Program	<b>\$10,000.00</b>	Anna Nolin	Central Office
<b>Total Award</b>	<b>\$31,257.00</b>		

Ms. Reed spoke to the donation to Natick Public Schools - *In Memory of Myrna Rosenthal Margil*, a donation in memory of School Committee member, David Margil's mother which School Committee members made in her honor. Mr. Margil extended his thanks and appreciation. Mr. Campbell moved to approve these donations with great gratitude. Mr. Laurent seconded. They were unanimously approved.

**Reapproval of School Committee Minutes September 8, 2014, October 6, 2014, October 20, 2014, November 17, 2014, December 1, 2014, December 15, 2014**

Ms. Mistrot requested that the School Committee reapprove the School Committee Minutes of September 8, 2014, October 6, 2014, October 20, 2014, November 17, 2014, December 1, 2014, and December 15, 2014. These minutes were revised as a result of a request made from a member of the public to include more detail on the public comments, both in public speak and to agenda items. Mr. Coburn moved to reapprove these minutes. Mr. Margil seconded. Mr. Coburn pointed out that the chair has implemented a new procedure which requires members of the public to sign in to speak to the Committee so their presence and comments can be accurately captured in our minutes. They were unanimously approved.

**Correspondence**

Chair Mistrot reported that two articles have been included in the School Committee correspondence:

1. Article relative to further awareness of sleep needs and our responsibility as a community to deal with that issue
2. Article showing comparison of MCAS and PARCC. It is a great assessment and eye opening article.

**Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Margil moved to approve the School Committee Minutes of January 5, 2015, January 12, 2015, Executive Session Minutes of January 29, 2015 and Executive Session Minutes of February 4, 2015. Ms. Reed seconded. They were unanimously approved.

At 10:15 p.m., Mr. Laurent moved to adjourn. Mr. Coburn seconded. It was unanimously approved.

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_

Peter Sanchioni, Ph.D.  
Superintendent  
Secretary to the School Committee

Sharon Reilly  
Recording Secretary

**Documents provided via Novus Agenda**

Request to Approve Donations

School Committee Minutes - January 5, 2015, January 12, 2015, Executive Session Minutes - January 29, 2015,  
Executive Session Minutes - February 4, 2015

Amended School Committee Minutes - September 8, 2014, October 6, 2014, October 20, 2014, November 17,  
2014, December 1, 2014, December 15, 2014

Information on Global Competency Certificate Program & PowerPoint Presentation

FY'16 Budget – Public Hearing PowerPoint presentation

FY'16 Budget Shortfall Strategy

FY'16 Budget – Technology PowerPoint Presentation

Correspondence:

1. Article: Sleep Deprived Teens: Our Fault & Our Problem

2. Article: A Comparison of the MCAS and PARCC Assessments as indicators of College & Career Readiness