

NHS School Council

December 10, 2024

MEETING SUMMARY

Attendance: Renee Ames, Amber Barbere, Chris Cain, Jeane Coffey, Declan Hocheiser, Emerson Leahy, Rourke Lee, Erin Seaton, Cady Seaton, Mike Testa, Andy Wulf

A) High School Updates

- Winter Concert - Mr. Wulf invited members of the team to check out the winter concert starting at 7:00 PM
- Color Day
 - One of the more energized Color Days in past years.
 - Fun spirit
 - Instagram posts highlighted the experience
- National Art Honor Society Auction
 - The auction took place on the 7th. Student and local artwork was put out to bid.
 - Fundraiser for the Art Honor Society
- Fan Section
 - The NHS fans have been rated one of the best in the state
- High School Showcase
 - Close to 25% of our students volunteered at the showcase
 - Feedback from visiting families highlighted the professionalism of our students

B) School Improvement Plan Adjustments from Feedback

- Andy Wulf shared the updates to the school improvement plan using feedback from the October meeting. Here reviewed the following adjustments:

GOAL 1: Added an additional strategy around student voice and feedback. See below.

Develop a tool to collect student voice/feedback around how lessons/units connect or do not connect to the POG. Use this feedback as means to adjust units and instruction.	ILT / Teachers	Student feedback reports used by teachers during common planning time. Notes from common planning show a summary of adjustments teachers make to plans based on student feedback.	On-Going
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GOAL 3: To address the conversation around "collection of student work," the following measure has been added to better define how this can show student growth.

All students have work portfolios that show an increase in reading, writing, math, and science practices.

GOAL 4: Removed the strategy of cross curricular planning with the arts and have incorporated this into goal 1 which has a focus on improving student engagement.

GOAL 4: Added a strategy that involves working with the partners, the city, school committee, and state/federal grants to identify funding sources for the building redesign to increase collaborative learning spaces.

C) Overview of School Performance

- Andy Wulf summarized the high school's performance based on the State's accountability measures. In summary, he shared:
 - ELA achievement stayed similar to prior years while math and science were lower than prior years.
 - Noted that though achievement either stayed flat or lessened, it is important to follow a grades assessment history. The Standard Growth Percentile (SGP) accommodates this. Newburyport High School exceeded targets for growth in many categories. Andy Wulf explained that demonstrates the learning from when the students had last taken the exam in 8th grade. He then provided an example of why.

"If a student in 8th grade earns a score of 500 on the MCAS, the student becomes part of a cohort of students across the state who also scored the same or similar score. When the student takes the MCAS again in 10th grade, the new score is compared to all of the other students from the same score cohort from the 8th grade. The student receives a growth percentile based on where a student's 10th grade score falls within that cohort. School's then receive an average SGP for all of their respective test takers. Having an SGP average in the 60s demonstrates high growth."

Andy Wulf further commented that due to the Class of 2027 high SGP in math and ELA, this group of students have made significant academic progress.

- Graduation rates for the high school continue to meet state assigned targets.
 - Chronic absenteeism improved but over 10% of students are still chronically absent.
 - The high school improved in the number of students enrolling in and successfully completing advanced coursework.
 - Andy Wulf reviewed Advanced Placement (AP) and SAT scores. He noted that the percentage of students taking AP courses has increased as well as the percentage of students earning a qualifying score on the end of the year exam. Additionally, more students are taking the SAT and scores have also increased for Newburyport.
- The council asked Andy Wulf what he feels has supported these results.
 - He explained a few years ago the council and school committee supported funding for a credit recovery program as well as specialized programs to support students having difficulty in their regular classes. He feels this has had a positive impact on the graduation rate. He also noted how these programs have supported subgroup performance on the MCAS. For the past few years, subgroup SGP has been in the high range.
 - As for advanced coursework, Andy Wulf feels the investment in having students take the PSAT has been very helpful. He explained that as a school, “We are getting better at using the data from the PSAT.”
 - Running lessons with students through advisory regarding their score reports helps students know areas for their own growth.
 - Teachers are able to run an AP Potential report which indicates the probability of a student being able to successfully take an AP exam. These reports are used to encourage students to take an AP class. This helped to diversify enrollment in the advanced courses.
 - Andy Wulf also attributed the increase in advanced coursework and the graduation rate to the College and Career Center. By creating more pathways that align with diverse interests, students stay in school and are more likely to take a higher level class. He noted how students part of the Peterson Program are now taking advanced technical courses.

D) Preliminary Budget Discussion

- Andy Wulf reviewed the protocol Council members would use for the budget discussion. In small groups, members discussed the budget using 2 prompts:
 1. What to consider for the budget should additional funding be available?
 2. What to prioritize in the school's current programming should funding be more limited?
- The table below summarizes the discussion.

To consider	To Prioritize
● Invest time and resources into developing the fundamental aspects of learning and demonstrating through alternative assessments ● Additional investment in supporting students during transition to high school ● Incorporate more opportunities for the arts during the school day ● Addressing media literacy more comprehensively ● Intro class for parents and students for college and career center ● Athletics equipment ● Staff Curriculum: More Business Courses, More advanced courses in Business ● New Elective Courses and Expansion of Languages ● Facilities: EV Charging and maximizing parking ● More alternative education paths and growing the program with different fields ● More high level accessible course work such as the SNHU partnership ● Expansion of the Arts program	● Staff compensation to support retention and ongoing engagement ● Alternative pathway programs for varied industries ● Dual enrollment programs through colleges and credit programs. ● Music program ● Sustain strong Student support staff (counseling, adj counseling, psychologist) ● Visual and performing arts programming