

NHS School Council

April 9, 2025

Attendance: Renee Ames, Chris Cain, Stacey Gijsbers, Declan Hochheiser, Amber Barbere, Jeanne Coffey, Mike Testa, Andy Wulf

1) HIGH SCHOOL UPDATES

Inspired Learning Day Updates (3/28/25)

- Team members reflected on the inspired learning day.
- Parents noted how students came home excited about their experience. They also noted how the build up to the event excited the students as well.
- Amber Barbere commented, “Students who learn in nontraditional ways, a day like this helps students who typically don’t like school, enjoy it. The experience also helps them build a connection with teachers.
- The council asked whether or not the school would be doing it again and Andy Wulf commented, “yes.” He elaborated how the Inspired Learning Day spawned from the work around the Portrait of the Graduate which is part of the improvement plan, so the school will definitely engage in it again.

ECP Climate/Culture Survey on 4/15/25

- Andy Wulf explained all students will take the ECP survey next week. This survey will give us information around our school climate. Unlike the VOCAL survey that grade 10 students take after the MCAS, the entire school will participate, teachers and students. This will give us an understanding of engagement, our learning environment and leadership quality.
- Stacy Gijsbers commented how she was able to look at the questions using the link from the email. She was very impressed with the quality of the questions and how different they were than the Assets survey students take every other year. She noted how the survey will give a picture of the school’s climate.
- Andy Wulf noted the results will be reviewed by the school council at the start of next school year so we can include what we learn from the results as part of the improvement plan. He then spoke about Goal 1 of the improvement plan which focuses on student engagement. The goal is currently measured by the VOCAL survey which grade 10 students take after the MCAS. Ideally, the ECP results will

become the main measurement for this goal. See below for the goal and its current measurement.

GOAL 1

Increase student engagement by incorporating the Portrait of a Graduate (POG) across NHS programming. This will be measured through the DESE VOCAL and the NHS Internal School Climate Survey.

Through the above strategies and activities, the NHS VOCAL student engagement score will increase to over 55. The average engagement score on VOCAL over the past 2 years has been 49.5 which is the high end of the "somewhat favorable" student engagement level. A score of 51 and higher is considered a "favorable" student engagement level.

Athletic Director

- Andy Wulf shared that the new Athletic Director, Anna DeVitto came to shadow Jim Antonelli. She will be scheduling a few more days to spend at NHS before she begins on July 1. This will allow here to meet with students, coaches, and teachers,

MCAS + Grade 9 Activities

- Andy Wulf presented in every Grade 10 ELA class prior to the March ELA MCAS, and this week is pushing into every Grade 9 Biology class to continue to emphasize the importance of MCAS despite the recent changes in the law around competency determination. Here is a copy of the [presentation](#) he has reviewed with the students.
- The Council asked about how MCAS is used for scholarships. Students noted that they are currently applying for local scholarships and many of the applications ask students to share their MCAS scores.

Intergenerational Dialogue - Cell Phones

- Administration reviewed how Lynne Cote and Eric Schildge (Nock) are working with a team of parents, students, and teachers. Each member of the team had to interview about 10 people about their perceptions about students' use of cell phones. This team will use the interview content to structure and plan what the

dialogue will look like/run. The purpose is to engage people in sharing what they value so that participants in the dialogue understand how ones values impact their feelings around the topic. This helps with active listening and empathy towards an opposing viewpoint.

- Andy Wulf emphasized how the high school is committed to using dialogue around issues in which people have varying perspectives. The school views the method as a means to model constructive conversations for students as well as adults. A primary objective of dialogue is to help participants feel heard and their ideas valued regardless of the direction of a final decision.
- Jeanne Coffey and Chris Cain both commented how they were interviewed by the planning team. Both felt the questions asked were thoughtful. Also noteworthy is that current policy did not mimic what was in practice regarding the cell phone holders in the classrooms.
- Andy Wulf asked all school council members to participate in the dialogue if they are able. The date is not currently set, but the goal is to have it in early May.

2) POLICY DISCUSSION - DAILY ATTENDANCE POLICY

- Mike Testa reviewed the updated [attendance policy](#) with the council.
- The council asked the following questions:
 - Should parents notify NHS if they know their child will be late?
 - How much documentation will NHS collect? (excusal notes, medical notes etc.)
 - Should the new policy conclude saying that we still want medical notes?
- Administration stated they would streamline the attendance procedures and have that for review at the next meeting.

3) SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROGRESS

- Andy Wulf reviewed the plan with the Council and stated how he will continue to bring evidence of progress to the Council as a way to monitor the high school's progress.
- Goal 1: He referenced the information from earlier in the meeting around the Inspired Learning Day and the I Can statements are all connected to Goal 1. Additionally, Andy reminded the team how the ECP survey would become the tool to help measure student engagement and the school's learning environment.

GOAL 2

All students graduate with a post-secondary plan and are able to showcase their story relevant to their interests and the skills part of the Portrait of the Graduate. This will be measured through high school completion results and completed student portfolios.

MEASUREMENT

Through the above strategies and activities, NHS will continue to meet or exceed targets as set by the State in the high school completion category of the DESE Accountability Report.

Through the above strategies and planning, all students (100%) will be able to showcase exemplars of their work relative to the competencies identified within the District's Portrait of a Graduate.

- Andy Wulf explained how the school has worked to strengthen it's advisory program. One of the strategies for Goal 2 was to gain feedback from students and teachers on the structure and quality of advisory lessons. Recently, teachers and students completed a survey to provide feedback and an advisory planning team then summarized the results.
- [Advisory Feedback Summary](#) - The council reviewed the summary and engaged in conversation.
 - Parents commented how they understand and appreciate how everyone values the Clipper Block, but wondered if this resulted as students may not understand how important it is to take time to think about their future.
 - Andy Wulf and Mike Testa assured the council that Advisory will continue. It just may not happen during Clipper Block. The school is committed to having the advisory program.
 - The council noted how having longer time to run an advisory lesson could help with the impact of the lesson.
 - Students present stated how a new schedule for advisory may better support the peer mentor program.
 - Andy Wulf noted that the advisory planning team will also include 1-2 students from each grade level to help decide when it's best to schedule an advisory.

GOAL 3

Improve academic achievement across all student groups as measured by MCAS, internal assessments, and student collection of work.

Measurement

Through the above strategies and activities, NHS students will meet or exceed achievement targets as set by the state and indicated through performance on MCAS. Additionally, the number of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the MCAS will increase by 10%.

All students (100%) have work portfolios and are able to demonstrate and communicate their own growth in reading, writing, math, and science practices as measured by rubrics used for each respective practice.

- A primary focus to support progress in this goal is teacher use of common planning time (CPT) An example of this work is below.
 - During last week's CPT, the biology team reviewed student results from a common assessment grade 9 students while the 10th graders took the ELA MCAS. The team developed an action plan using the information. They identified four standards to reteach. Students who did not perform well on these standards will be assigned to Clipper block for the reteach lesson.
 - Using the above structure as a model, the objective will be for each subject area to have 3-4 interim common assessments next year in which teachers will plan interventions from the results.
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Goal 4

Newburyport High School has a building redesign plan that creates flexible and collaborative spaces designed to integrate curricular areas, support college/career pathways, and promote student creativity.

Through the above strategies and activities, NHS will increase flexible and collaborative spaces that support cross-curricular learning.

- Andy Wulf and Mike Testa provided a quick overview of building redesign and upcoming projects to support progress in this goal.
 - Video Production Lab (first floor) and future integrated arts area in the lower level.
 - Chapter 74 funding potentially available for a technical/vocational pathway (Video).
 - Upcoming Daycare facility for NPS staff, could become another field of study for NHS students, first starting with an internship. Could become a vocational pathway.
 - Administration will provide the council with renderings at the next meeting so they can have a visual for a tentative plan for the downstairs spaces to support this goal.