

MINUTES OF THE OUTREACH MEETING OF THE NORWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

October 20, 2025

The Norwell School Committee met in the Meeting Room at Norwell Public Library on Monday, October 20, 2025. Clerk Alison Link called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. Present were Chair Kristin McEachern, Vice Chair Christina Kane, Ms. Link, Scott Dyke, Lisa DiFrisco and Superintendent Matthew Keegan. The meeting went into Executive Session at approximately 6:35 p.m., and returned to Open Session at 7:00 p.m.

Ms. McEachern and Superintendent Keegan welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Principal Marc Bender. The *Recognizing Excellence* segment is scheduled each fall so that several Norwell High School seniors who have earned awards may include these prestigious awards with their college applications. This year's recipients, along with their parents, were in attendance to receive their awards and to be recognized publicly for their outstanding accomplishments and contributions. Mr. Bender introduced this year's recipient of the M.A.S.S. Certificate of Academic Excellence award – Eleanor "Ellie" Robinson. Mr. Bender provided a synopsis of Ellie's high school career and accomplishments. Mr. Bender followed this by presenting students with various well-deserved awards including the MSSAA Principal's award to Grace Hawk; NESDEC awards to Isabella Rinaldi and Connor Gorman; NMSQT Commended Student awards were presented to Evie Donovan, Grace Hawk, and Callan Kuczma, and the DAR Good Citizen award to Evie Donovan. Mr. Bender read each award recipient's achievements prepared by his/her school counselor. Mr. Bender, Mr. Keegan and Committee members congratulated the students, their families, and faculty for their role in the students' accomplishments.

Using PowerPoint, High School teacher Cara Hamilton and student leaders of the Model UN Club including Virginia Clarke, Sophia DiFrisco, Sam Johnson, Liam Foy, Henry Davies, Henry Herman, James Bass, Mac Bartley, and Jacob Cornwall provided an overview and shared experiences attending and participating in Model UN conferences and insights they've gained from their participation. Model UN places students in the role of delegates representing countries as they work to negotiate resolutions addressing global issues of concern. Recent topics students have tackled included Promoting Girls' Education Worldwide; Preserving and Restoring Cultural Artifacts; the Conflict in Sudan; Promoting Green Jobs in Developing Countries; and Climate Refugees.

Student council member Grace Hawk discussed school council activities and reported on progress related to school improvement goals. The list of Council members and meeting dates was included in agenda packets.

PTO President Jana McCarthy discussed PTO activities, including various ways they have supported the high school and their teacher grant awards.

Ms. Jill Donovan discussed plans and activities for Norwell Arts. Ms. Donovan displayed the poster for the upcoming play production *Mamma Mia!* with performances scheduled for November 14, 15 and 16.

Ms. Kristen Poulin of the High School Boosters Club updated the Committee on the club's plans and activities. The Boosters raised \$186,000 last year, and donate \$35,000 to the athletic department each year.

Mr. Keegan requested a motion to move up Agenda item 6.6: Student Government Representative. Ms. Link moved, seconded by Ms. DiFrisco, to move Agenda 6.6 out of order. The motion was unanimously approved: DiFrisco, Aye, Kane, Aye, McEachern, Aye, Link, Aye, and Dyke, Aye.

Student Government Representative Isabelle Carlisle went over recent events at the High School. The outreach portion of the meeting ended at 8:00 p.m. Ms. McEachern thanked all the participants, and invited them to stay for regular business.

Ms. Link moved to approve the minutes of the Executive and Regular sessions of the Norwell School Committee meeting on September 15, 2025, accounts payable and refund warrants #12 signed by Ms. Christina Kane, accounts payable and refund warrants #13, #14 and #16 signed by Ms. Kristin McEachern, and the International Excursion to France and Belgium on April 14 – 24, 2027, as proposed. The motion was seconded by Ms. DiFrisco and was approved unanimously: DiFrisco, Aye, Kane, Aye, McEachern, Aye, Link, Aye, and Dyke, Aye.

Policy LBA: Middle School Pathway Exploration was included in the Google folder. Ms. Link moved, seconded by Ms. DiFrisco, to approve Policy LBA for second and final reading, as proposed. The motion was approved unanimously: DiFrisco, Aye, Kane, Aye, McEachern, Aye, Link, Aye, and Dyke, Aye.

Director of Teaching, Learning & Technology Meredith Erickson reviewed Policy IKFB: Competency Determination Requirements, a copy of which was included in agenda packets with tracked changes. Ms. Link moved, seconded by Ms. DiFrisco, to approve Policy IKFB for first reading, as proposed. The motion was approved unanimously: DiFrisco, Aye, Kane, Aye, McEachern, Aye, Link, Aye, and Dyke, Aye.

A proposed 2025-2026 School Committee Meeting Schedule amendment to move the January meeting date to January 26, 2026 was included in agenda packets. Ms. Link moved, seconded by Ms. DiFrisco, to approve the amendment to the 2025-2026 School Committee Meeting Schedule, as proposed. The motion was approved unanimously: DiFrisco, Aye, Kane, Aye, McEachern, Aye, Link, Aye, and Dyke, Aye.

A memorandum from Athletic Director JJ Niamkey seeking approval to renew and apply for a two-year cooperative waiver on behalf of the Norwell and Cohasset High Schools' gymnastics team with the addition of the Notre Dame Academy gymnastics team to the co-op commencing for the 2025-2026 winter season was included in agenda packets. Ms. Link moved, seconded by Ms. DiFrisco, to approve the cooperative waiver on behalf of the Norwell and Cohasset gymnastics team to also include the Notre Dame Academy gymnastics team, commencing in the 2025-2026 winter season, as proposed. The motion was approved unanimously: DiFrisco, Aye, Kane, Aye, McEachern, Aye, Link, Aye, and Dyke, Aye.

Mr. Keegan presented a PowerPoint outlining the *2025-2026 October 1 Enrollment and Class Size Report*. This report shows current enrollments and class sizes throughout the schools and includes information regarding the class size and section changes for exploratory classes at the secondary level. Mr. Keegan reviewed the districtwide impacts on the cuts that were made. He will provide an update regarding the State of the Schools going forward, and requested the Committee's input on additional comparisons they would like to see in upcoming meetings.

The *2025-2026 School Census*, overall, is very similar to last year although there was a decrease of 21 students K-12. The enrollment numbers in each building continue to fluctuate. This year 89.79% of the Norwell resident students attend Norwell Public Schools. Last year 89.54% of Norwell resident students attended Norwell Public Schools. Overall, the total number of students attending private school over the last four years is as follows: 201 in 2023, 189 in 2024, 179 in 2025, and 173 this year.

The second school census sheet shows the specific private schools attended by Norwell residents by grade. There are 17 home-schooled students. The student movement tracker for 2025 tracks students that are moving in and out of the district as well as movement to and from private schools and is based upon October 1st enrollment. More students have moved out than have moved in: 12 students moved into the district and 32 moved out. Students enrolling in private schools have decreased by 7 in K-4, have increased by 15 in 5-8, and has decreased by 14 in grades 9-12. The 4 reports noted were include in agenda packets.

The Class of 2025 Update, Graduating Class Profile and SAT Summary reports were included in agenda packets. The Graduation Profile Class of 2025 included college acceptances and college attended categories. The Graduating Class Profile 1996-2025 allows comparison of SAT scores, National Honor Society membership, graduation plans, and college acceptance since 1996.

A PowerPoint AP report was presented by Principal Mark Bender. The High School AP program performed extremely well in 2025. A total of 431 tests were taken with 253 test takers (as compared to 234 test takers in 2024) with 86.56% of scores receiving a 3 or higher. The only other three years where the High School was above 80% were 2016, 2017, 2023, and 2024. Ms. Kristin Poulin commented and asked a question regarding AP Economics which was answered by Mr. Bender.

Director of Teaching, Learning & Technology Meredith Erickson presented a PowerPoint which was included in agenda packets on the 2025 MCAS Scores and Accountability. Ms. Erickson shared with the Committee that the full accountability process has been completed along with school percentiles. Ms. Erickson provided an overview of MCAS results for grades 3-8 and grade 10 with comparisons to the state and benchmark districts.

A copy of Leadership Team Performance Goals was included in agenda packets. Mr. Keegan shared that many of these goals come together to support a few key elements of the Strategic Plan.

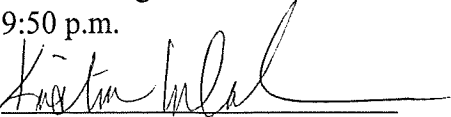
Mr. Keegan and the Director of Finance, Operations & Technology Warren MacCallum reported on the bus transportation report that was included in the agenda packet. The scheduling of bus routes has been outsourced this year.

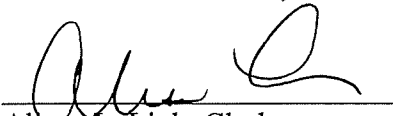
Mr. Keegan updated the Committee on Clipper Community Complex bathrooms project which will be a Community Preservation Committee request. Mr. Keegan, Ms. McEachern, Mr. MacCallum and Town Administrator Darleen Sullivan have met with Boosters members Kristen Poulin and Katy O'Connor Neefus to discuss their proposal for CCC Bathrooms through the CPC. The Committee will be further updated on this process, and a presentation will come in the near future for approval purposes.

Mr. Keegan noted correspondence that was included in the Google folder: the amended FY'27 Budget Development Process Timeline, SSEC quarterly update, and school newsletters since the September 15 meeting.

Congress of Councils will be held at 7:00 p.m. at the Sparrell Building PD Center on October 21, 2025. The next regular meeting will be on November 24, 2025 followed by a December 15, 2025 Outreach Meeting - Cole School Presentations, both at the Norwell Public Library.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Ms. Link moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 p.m.


November 24, 2025
Kristin A. McEachern, Chair


November 24, 2025
Alison L. Link, Clerk