

# NHS School Council

March 3, 2026

## MEETING SUMMARY

**Member Attendance:** Amber Barbere, Jeanne Coffey, Rich Pace, Aaron Ribaud-Smith, Thomas Rich, Lucy Rimer, Andy Wulf

### I) High School Updates

- **Inspired Learning Day**

Andy Wulf explained that teachers are finalizing lessons and students will choose from options during the Onward Block on March 19th. This year will feature three 60-minute sessions instead of longer blocks to provide more variety.

Students discussed that junior prom is the same day and Andy Wulf confirmed students must attend school that day to be eligible for prom

- **Budget**

Andy Wulf explained that Sean Gallagher presented in early February what a level service budget would like financially to the school committee. An adjusted budget plan will also be presented. Currently there is no change to the high school proposal. Andy explained that the pathway programs are a priority for the high school.

- **Career Technical Education (CTE) Expansion**

Andy Wulf shared that he and Erin Hobbs presented to the school committee about expanding career technical education. He explained a steering committee is being formed with representatives from the city, Chamber of Commerce, Northern Essex Community College, Merrimack Valley Workforce Board and other school and community stakeholders. The objective of the steering committee will be to assist the school in developing a 5 year plan to expand CTE supported through state Ch. 74 funding.

Parents asked about enrollment in the current Innovation Pathways. Andy Wulf stated that 2024-25 school year was the first year NHS ran an approved pathway. He shared 6 students had enrolled. Based on the course registration happening now, "We will be over 40 students heading into next school year."

Andy Wulf noted that Amber Barbere will represent the School Council on the Steering

Committee.

- **Student Learning Dialogues**

The objective of the dialogues is to help improve student engagement in the classroom.

Teachers and students present talked about their experiences with the current dialogue. In summary, they feel the conversations have been productive and have allowed teachers and students to reflect on what engagement can look like in the classroom.

Andy Wulf explained at the end of each dialogue, the teachers and students participating complete an exit slip responding to the following questions:

#### **Student Exit Slip Questions**

1. Based on everything you've shared and what you've learned from others in this conversation - **What is your key responsibility, or takeaway, to ensure your own learning is challenging, engaging, and connected to your life?**
2. Based on everything you've shared and what you've learned from others in this conversation - **List 1 thing you hope teachers consider when they develop engaging and challenging learning moments for their subject area.**

#### **Teacher Exit Slip Questions**

1. Based on everything you've shared and what you've learned from others in this conversation - **What is your key takeaway for identifying and creating challenging, engaging, and connected learning moments in your classroom?**
2. Based on everything you've shared and what you've learned from others in this conversation - **What do you hope students will bring with them when they engage in high school academics and activities?**

#### **Next Steps**

Teachers part of the Instructional Leadership Team will review all of the exit slips and identify themes from the student and teacher responses. Departments will then work on shifts to better support student engagement

## **II) Policy Discussion**

### **STUDENT PARKING**

- Andy Wulf reminded the Council that Chris Cain asked them to review the student parking policy at the February meeting due to the issue of students parking in teacher spaces when coming early for workouts.
- Andy Wulf presented the proposed change to explicitly state "**no student parking**

on the grounds of Newburyport High School from 7am until 3pm."

- The council unanimously approved the change to the parking policy

## GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Andy Wulf said in follow-up from the February 3rd meeting, the Council asked him to provide a comparison of the Mass Core Requirements to that of Newburyport High School.

### Section 3 - Academics

**3.1 – Credits and Graduation Requirements**

Newburyport High School credits for graduation are obtained by having attended NHS for at least one semester. All courses at Newburyport High School are semester courses that normally yield a total of 2.5 graduation credits. Credit values for individual courses are contained in the description presented in the current *Program of Studies* and are granted to students upon successful completion of a given course of study. To graduate from NHS, students must accumulate 110 credits, pass all of the required courses of study, achieve competency determination "CD" (see below 3.2), and have attended NHS for at least one semester.

The subject areas and credit quantities required of students are as follows:

English	4 years	20 credits
History	4 years	20 credits
Mathematics	3 years	15 credits
Science	3 years	15 credits
World Language	2 years	10 credits
Physical Education	4 semesters	10 credits
Visual and Performing Arts	2 semesters	<u>5 credits</u>
		<b>95 credits</b>

The additional credits required to reach 110 credits for graduation are to be chosen from those courses listed in the *Program of Studies*.

### MassCore Framework

MassCore is a recommended program of study Massachusetts high school students need to excel in college, career, and civic life.

Developed by an advisory group from elementary and secondary education, higher education, nonprofits, and the private sector, MassCore maintains flexibility for students while letting districts set additional graduation requirements. Courses included in MassCore should be rigorous, engaging, and based on appropriate learning standards for high school or beyond.

**Massachusetts High School Program of Studies**

Subject	Number of Units*	Notes
English Language Arts	4 Units	4 units of high school (or beyond) English language arts
Mathematics	4 Units	Including completion of Algebra II or the Integrated Mathematics equivalent. A mathematics course during senior year is recommended for all students. Students may substitute one unit of <b>Computer Science</b> that includes rigorous mathematical concepts and aligns with the Digital Literacy and Computer Science standards for a mathematics course.
Science	3 Units of lab-based science	Coursework in technology/engineering courses may also count for MassCore science credit. Students may substitute one unit of <b>Computer Science</b> that includes rigorous scientific concepts and aligns with the Digital Literacy and Computer Science standards for a laboratory science course.
History and Social Science	3 Units	Including U.S. History and World History.
World Language**	2 Units	Of the same language. Districts may designate students with demonstrated fluency and literacy in language(s) other than English as meeting the MassCore recommendations for World language.
Physical Education	As required by law	*Physical education shall be taught as a required subject in all grades for all students" (M.G.L. c.71 §3).
Arts**	1 Unit	The course should meet the definition of a unit and be based on the <a href="#">2019 Massachusetts Arts Curriculum Framework</a> . Generally, the study of the arts includes dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts.
Additional Core Courses	5 Units	Other additional coursework (including Career and Technical Education) or any of the above.

\*A unit represents a full academic year of study or its equivalent to a subject that covers all the standards contained in a specific Curriculum Framework.  
 Students enrolled in a state-approved Career and Technical Education program of studies may opt out of World Language and Arts and still fulfill MassCore.

The council reviewed the current NHS graduation requirements alongside the state's MassCore recommendations. Members noted that NHS currently requires three years of mathematics, while the state recommends four years. The state recommends three years of History and Social Studies, while NHS currently requires four.

Parents asked whether there is a requirement for the high school to align with the state's framework and why NHS requirements were not originally aligned.

Andy Wulf explained that the current requirements have remained unchanged for many years. A review of graduation requirements had not been a priority during his tenure, as the school's DESE report card has consistently indicated that 100% of NHS students meet the MassCore requirements. However, he noted that the district is now applying for pathway and CTE programming, and MassCore alignment is a component of those applications. He stated that aligning requirements supports the broader effort to re-envision the high school program.

Andy Wulf presented the following recommendation:

- Increase the mathematics requirement to **four units (four full years)**.
- Reduce the **History/Social Studies requirement to three units**.
- Establish **Civics/Government as a separate ½-unit graduation requirement**.

He explained that although Civics is not explicitly listed within MassCore, schools must report to DESE on student completion of a Civics course or project. The Civics Action Research Project completed in the Government course also supports competencies identified in the district's Portrait of a Graduate and builds on literacy skills developed through the Sophomore Exposition and Junior History Argumentative Research Essay.

Rich Pace (ELA teacher) expressed support for making the Civics course a stand-alone requirement to emphasize the Civics project.

Council members expressed agreement with the recommendation. Andy Wulf noted that the council can vote to approve the recommendation at the **April 7 meeting**.

The council asked how the changes would be implemented if approved this spring. Andy Wulf explained that implementation would either begin with this year's freshman class or with the Class of 2030.

## **HONOR ROLL**

Tommy Rich brought up how the current Honor Roll Policy indicates the need to take 13 semester classes to be eligible for honor roll, which prevents students taking multiple AP courses from having a full-year study hall.

Lucy Rimer shared a personal experience with scheduling challenges as a student taking multiple AP classes.

Andy Wulf commented that he believes students in the past have had 2 semesters of an AP Enrichment and this has not impacted whether they make the honor roll. He said he will follow up with Ms. Nelson regarding the parameters being used for the honor roll.

Aaron Ribaud-Smith noted the policy may have been designed to prevent competitive students from avoiding electives that might lower their GPA.

Andy Wulf followed-up that when the schedule changed back in 2020, study halls were removed and Clipper Block was created. It is possible the language in the handbook may be left over from when every student in the school was given a semester study hall. He further explained that part of the school's redesign over the past several years has been to create flexibility that enables students to pursue a variety of advanced-level opportunities, including dual enrollment, AP courses, and technical internship or capstone projects.

## **UNETHICAL USE OF AI**

Andy Wulf asked the team to review the Unethical Use of AI Policy in the Clipper Compass (below). He noted an increase in incidents of students using AI on writing and analysis assignments. As an example, he explained that students sometimes ask AI to generate quotes from a text they are analyzing, and the quotes produced are often not direct quotes from the book.

He said that in most cases when teachers address the issue with students and parents, the conversation goes well and the policy is followed. However, there have been more instances in which families push back despite the teacher's judgment and supporting evidence.

The English department has asked the council to review the policy and consider whether an additional layer—such as a panel review—should be added when there is disagreement between a parent and a teacher.

### **Current Language - 5.23 Unethical Uses of AI**

#### **First Offense**

- The teacher will conference with the student to bring forward concerns about the assignment. (If desired or needed admin can support in this meeting).
- Parent/guardian will be informed by the teacher via email and a meeting may be set up to discuss the offense. (If desired or needed admin can support in this meeting).
- Provide the student with opportunities to make up the assignment or that portion of the assignment to ensure it's their original work. Depending on the assignment (formative vs. summative), a student may or may not lose credit.

#### **Second Offense**

- Parents/guardians will be informed by the teacher by phone. Admin will be informed. Admin will support this process.
- Depending on the assignment (formative vs. summative), a student may or may not lose credit.

**Third and Subsequent Offenses**

- Refer the student to administration. Parents/guardians will be informed by administration.
- The student will lose credit for the assignment and may also receive detention.

Jeanne Coffey asked whether the school teaches or provides examples to students of ethical versus unethical uses of AI on assignments. Andy Wulf said he believes conversations about ethical and unethical uses of AI occur in classrooms and will look into whether teachers provide students with supporting documents.

Rich Pace commented on how there are varying ways teachers are able to identify whether students use AI on an assignment.

Aaron Ribaud-Smith emphasized the importance of teaching responsible AI use rather than simply prohibiting it. He further shared how he is going to a conference to learn about how colleges are encouraging professors to incorporate AI into their lessons.

Multiple council members discussed how AI is transforming various industries and there is a responsibility to prepare students on how to use it appropriately.

Due to the time remaining in the meeting, Andy Wulf stated the council will have a more in-depth discussion at the April meeting with a focus on looking at the policy in regards to the intent of the current policy. The prompts the team will use for the discussion include:

- Is our current tiered consequence model sufficient, or do we need an additional step that formalizes the review process before consequences are assigned?
- Should our policy include a clearer process for how evidence of AI misuse is documented and reviewed when a family disputes a teacher's determination?
- What does due process look like in cases of suspected AI misuse, and does our current policy reflect that?

Andy Wulf asked the Council members to review prompts before the April meeting.