

Minutes

Northgate School Board Meeting

Monday, August 24, 2026

Northgate District Administration Boardroom

The Regular meeting of the Northgate Board of School Directors was held Monday, August 24, 2026. The meeting was opened at 5:37 p.m. by Mrs. Cheryl Patalano.

Roll call showed the following Board Members present: Mrs. Cheryl Patalano, President; Mrs. Wendi Lee, Vice President; Mr. Michael Rajacovich, Treasurer; Dr. William Bergmann; Dr. Melissa Bilski; Mrs. Amber Lehman; Mrs. Abigail Lindsey; Mrs. Chelsea MacDonald.

Staff present: Dr. Caroline Johns, Superintendent; Mr. Christopher Ursu, Director of Finance and Operations; Anthony Giglio, Esq.; Mr. Connor Hulslander, Baseball Coach; Ms. Emily Carter, Board Secretary.

Motion was made by Mrs. Patalano, seconded by Mrs. Lee, that the minutes from the July 1, 2026, July 20, 2026, and August 10, 2026 Committee meetings and General meeting be approved. Motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Superintendent's Report: Mrs. Jennifer Aranda gave a presentation on the proposed Northgate Baseball Spring Training trip.

Motion was made by Mr. Rajacovich, seconded by Mrs. Lehman, that the Board approve the August 2026 Treasurer's Report (Addendum I). Motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Visitors' Commentary: Laura Schaeffer addressed the Board regarding the batting cages and field, expressing concern that Pittsburgh Spirit was taking a significant amount of time and resources from Northgate students. Mr. Connor Hulslander, of Gibsonia, echoed these concerns, stating that Pittsburgh Spirit has arrived early and pressured Northgate students to leave, in addition to placing extensive signage on district property. Dr. Johns expressed her desire to meet with the Northgate coaches to further discuss this issue.

Motion was made by Mr. Rajacovich, seconded by Dr. Bergmann, that the Board approve District Operations Committee item A1 as follows:

1. Bill List & Tax Refunds

Ratify the June and July 2026 Bill Lists and approve the Tax Refunds.

Motion to approve District Operations Committee item A1 was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Motion was made by Mr. Rajacovich, seconded by Mrs. Lehman, that the Board approve District Operations Committee item A2 as follows:

2. Use of Facility Requests

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Approve the following routine use of facility requests upon submission for the 2026-27 school year with specific dates, times, and locations to be approved based on availability and coordinated with the Facility Manager and Athletic's department, and contingent on proof of proper insurance coverage designating Northgate as an additional insured party and a mutual hold harmless agreement, where applicable: Bellevue Avalon Baseball Association (BABA); Bellevue Avalon Girls' Athletic Association (BAGAA); Northgate Aquatics Club (NGAC); Tidal Waves; Kids of Steel; Girls on the Run; Northgate Boys' Basketball Boosters - Undergraduate Tournament; Northgate Boys' Basketball Alumni - summer league; West Penn Football Officials - meetings; Golden Triangle Basketball Officials - meetings; Greater Pittsburgh Football Officials - meetings; Volleyball Officials - meetings; Northgate Athletic Booster Groups; Northgate Band Boosters; Northgate Odyssey of the Mind.

Motion to approve District Operations Committee item A2 was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Motion was made by Mr. Rajacovich, seconded by Dr. Bergmann, that the Board approve District Operations Committee item A3 as follows:

3. Use of Facility Agreement

Approve a 1-year agreement with Pittsburgh Spirit to use athletic facilities at Northgate for games and practices (softball field and batting cages) at \$50 an hour, contingent upon availability, proper insurance coverage, and agreeing to a mutual hold harmless agreement. The term of this agreement shall be July 1, 2026 and continuing through June 30, 2027.

Dr. Johns suggested postponing the vote on the Use of Facility Agreement so that she could speak further with Pittsburgh Spirit and the Northgate coaches. Dr. Bergmann shared his desire for more clarity on the agreement regarding the rights of the Northgate and Pittsburgh Spirit coaches with respect to the field.

Motion was made by Mr. Rajacovich, seconded by Mrs. Lehman, that item A3 be postponed. Motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Motion was made by Mr. Rajacovich, seconded by Mrs. Lee, that the Board approve District Operations Committee item A4 as follows:

4. Master Key

Approve issuing a Master Key to the Bellevue Police Department.

Motion to approve District Operations Committee item A4 was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Motion was made by Mrs. MacDonald, seconded by Mrs. Lindsey, that the Board approve Student Affairs Committee items B1 through B6 as follows:

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1. ATSI Plan

Approve the ATSI Plan for the 2026-27 school year.

2. Tree Pittsburgh MOU

Approve an agreement for the 2026-27 school year with Tree Pittsburgh to provide outdoor and potted trees for the district, at no cost to the district.

3. Grove City MOU

Approve an MOU with Grove City College to offer shadowing placement for nursing students in the 2026-27 school year, contingent upon review of the agreement by the Solicitor.

4. Deer Lakes

Approve a contract with Deer Lake Services for placement of students into a partial program for mental health support, effective July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027.

5. Elementary Handbook Update

Approve a change in the elementary student handbook to address student smart watch usage in the school district.

6. Student Trip

Approve the request for students and Michael Bichko, Spanish Teacher, and Brandon Hogle, Social Studies Teacher, to be excused from school to attend a trip to Peru, April 4 - April 14, 2028. This will be a non-school funded trip.

Motion to approve Student Affairs Committee items B1 through B6 was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Motion was made by Mrs. MacDonald, seconded by Dr. Bergmann, that the Board approve Student Affairs Committee item B7 as follows:

7. Baseball Trip

Approve the request for students participating on the Northgate baseball team and Scott Stiteler, Health Teacher, to be excused from school to attend a trip to Florida for spring training March 12 - March 17, 2027. This will be a non-school funded or sponsored trip.

Motion to approve Student Affairs Committee item B7 was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Policies: Motion was made by Mr. Rajacovich, seconded by Mrs. Lindsey, that the Board approve the First Reading of Policy 122 - Extra Curricular Activities; Policy 122.1 - Noncurriculum-Related Nonschool-Sponsored, Student-Initiated Groups; and Policy 105.2 -

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Exemption From Instruction. Mrs. Lee asked for clarification as to whether students would be given an alternate assignment when excused under Policy 105.2. Dr. Johns stated that students would be given an alternate assignment in accordance with the policy. Motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Motion was made by Mrs. Patalano, seconded by Dr. Bergmann, that the Board approve Administration items D1 through D9 as follows:

1. Michelle King Agreement

Approve to extend an agreement with Michelle King to continue to provide consulting services for the 2026-27 school year at an amount not to exceed \$17,000.

2. Divided Supplemental

Approve Kayla Cole and Andrea Malm as National Honor Society sponsors for the 2026-27 school year at a rate of \$1,904, to be divided as \$952 per sponsor.

3. Divided Supplemental

Approve Brandon Hogle and Jennifer Mignella as Prom Coordinator for the 2026-27 school year.

4. Supplemental Positions

Approve the following supplemental positions for the 2026-27 school year: Kathryn Whitman, Yearbook; Stacy Gallagher, Student Council (HS); Brandon Hogle, Weightlifting; Michael Bichko, Activity Account; Scott Stiteler, AV Coordinator; Scott Stiteler, Game Manager (Winter); Scott Stiteler, Game Manager (Fall); Sue Emery, Safety Coordinator (BV); Stephanie Francis, Student Council (MS); Jennifer Tusick, Entrepreneurship; Jason Clarkson, eSPORTS Club; Gretchen Monahan, Forensics (MS); Zach Burns, V.O.I.C.E.S.; Michael Bichko, World Languages.

5. Harvard Project Zero

Approve the contract with Harvard University effective September 1, 2026 to November 1, 2026 for a fee of \$5,000. This cost will cover the fee for speakers for the October 12, 2026 Project Zero conference. This initial cost will be fully or partially covered by the registration fees of outside attendees.

6. Sodexo Hire

Approve Jennifer Geibel as a cafeteria worker for Sodexo, contingent on receipt of acceptable clearances. Continued utilization of cafeteria workers is at the discretion of the School District.

7. Resignation

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Accept the resignation of Emily Lenhart as Teacher's Assistant, effective immediately.

8. Teacher #1 Sabbatical

Approve the request of teacher #1 (26-27 and 2027-28) for a medical Sabbatical Leave for the spring semester of the 2026-27 school year and the fall semester of the 2027-28 school year at one-half the teacher's regular salary.

9. YMCA Lunch Sponsor to Sponsor

Approve the Sponsor to Sponsor Agreement with Sodexo, effective October 1, 2026 to September 30, 2027, which allows for the District's food service management to provide meals to the YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh.

Motion to approve Administration items D1 through D9 was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Items for Information:

A.W. Beattie Career Center Report: Given by Mrs. Lee and Dr. Bilski. The Beattie Career Center shared information on its new academy for fire instruction and EMS, through which students are now able to become certified to drive EMS vehicles; four students were hired by McCandless EMS and five were certified as EMTs by the end of the program. Beattie hopes to expand the program beyond Beattie to involve more schools. The program also taught students and staff how to respond to heart-related emergencies. Senator Lindsey Williams will attend the September meeting.

Legislative Report: Given by Mr. Rajacovich. The Governor has passed the state budget for education, which includes increased grants, an increased special education budget, increased school infrastructure funding, increased school safety and mental health funding, increased career and technical funding, level funding for universal breakfast, and increased funding for menstrual hygiene. K-5 recess without technology was passed, beginning next school year, and performance-based changes were made to higher education entrance requirements. School infrastructure funding, including for solar, was increased, and Mr. Rajacovich recommended that Northgate follow up on this funding opportunity. Special education funding increases have not kept pace with need, though another bill addressing this may be forthcoming. Within the next five years, a county-wide property tax reassessment will be performed, which is intended to make assessments more fair for property owners and may result in a slight increase in revenue for Northgate. Mr. Rajacovich noted that an anti-windfall bill could also come into effect.

Visitors' Commentary: Keith Romac, of Bellevue, addressed the Board with concerns regarding rising taxes in connection with the new property assessment, and raised the possibility of combining Northgate with other school boroughs to provide additional resources for the district.

Mrs. Patalano reviewed the Dates to Remember.

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Motion was made by Mrs. Patalano, seconded by Mrs. Lehman, that the meeting be adjourned.
Meeting was adjourned by unanimous voice vote at 6:43 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Emily Carter

Emily Carter

Board Secretary, Northgate School District