

NHS SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING SUMMARY

OCTOBER 6, 2026

In Attendance: Jeanne Coffey, Neve Mullin, Luna Mutabdzija, Rich Pace, Erin Seaton, Cady Seaton, Andy Wulf

I) Introductions: Highlight and Hope for School Year

- **Highlights and Hopes**

Council members introduced themselves and shared highlights from the start of the school year as well as hopes for the year ahead. Members noted the positive energy in the building, increased student engagement, enjoyable classes, and the positive impact of the cell phone policy on student interaction. Jean Coffey highlighted the holistic approach she observed during Back to School Night, while students shared positive experiences with their classes and increased peer engagement.

Members also shared hopes for the year, including continuing the positive momentum in the building, helping students better understand and articulate their educational journeys, and continuing to develop the Portrait of a Graduate initiative.

II) Review Open Meeting Law and Sign-off on Receipt

- **Open Meeting Law**

Council members received and reviewed the Open Meeting Law information and signed the required receipt.

- **Meeting Procedures**

Andy Wulf reviewed the structure of School Council meetings. Meetings are public and are recorded through Zoom to assist with meeting documentation. Meeting summaries are shared with Council members, included in the monthly "Go Clippers" communication.

III) School Updates

- **Opening of School and First Month**

Andy Wulf shared an update on the positive start to the school year, highlighting the positive energy in the building, increased student engagement, and progress with several school initiatives. He also acknowledged the strong leadership of this year's senior class. They engaged the full school in the homecoming dance and the student fan leads have done a nice job to help ensure our students demonstrate sportsmanship as spectators at games.

- **Cell Phone Policy – Updated Consequences, First Month Data**

Andy Wulf provided an update on the implementation of the revised cell phone policy. While referrals have increased, overall student compliance has been positive. Several students will begin submitting their phones to the main office each day as a consequence of repeated violations.

Mr. Pace and the students present noted increased peer-to-peer interaction during lunch and in the hallways and a growing understanding of the purpose behind the policy.

- **Clipper Block**

Andy Wulf provided an update on the revised Clipper Block procedures. Students who do not register or do not attend their selected teacher session are assigned to an administrative Clipper Block. Only five students required administrative intervention during the most recent session.

Students present raised questions about the 11:50 AM sign-up deadline and how students participating in internships can register. Andy Wulf will consider adjustments to the process.

- **College and Career Support**

The Council discussed the expanded college and career opportunities available to students. College application support sessions and application boot camps are being provided for seniors, with additional programming planned for juniors later in the year. More than 100 colleges and universities are scheduled to visit NHS during the school year, and many juniors are taking advantage of opportunities to participate in college visits.

- **PSAT Day**

Sophomores and juniors will take the PSAT on Thursday. Freshmen will participate in project-based learning and wellness activities focused on collaborative problem-solving and a presentation on decision-making. Seniors will have opportunities for college essay support. Andy Wulf noted that this is the fifth year NHS has provided the PSAT to all sophomores and juniors.

- **School Safety Drill**

The school will conduct a safety drill on Friday. Students viewed a safety drill video in advance, and the Newburyport Police Department will participate in the drill.

V) School Improvement Plan

- **Reflect on Last Year's Accomplishments**

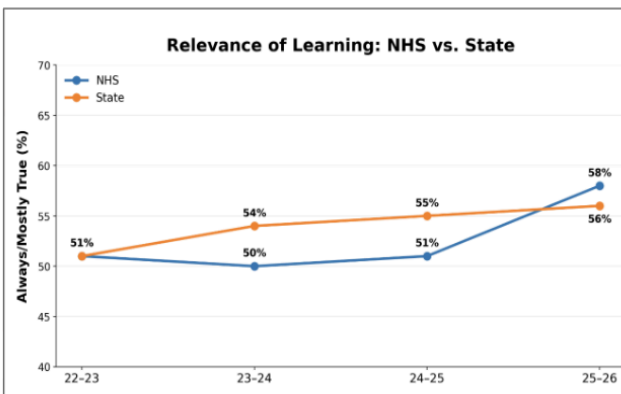
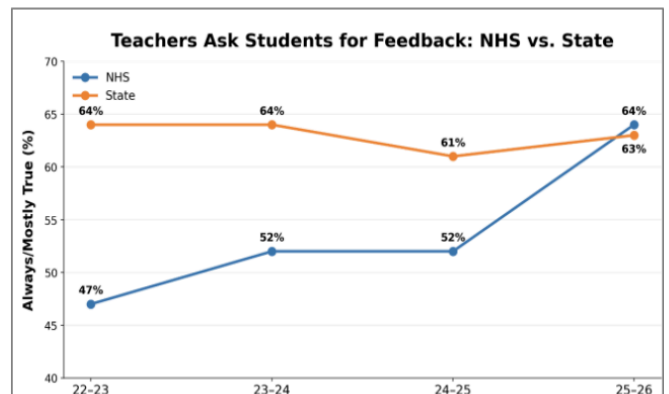
Andy Wulf reviewed progress connected to the [School Improvement Plan](#) and the Portrait of a Graduate. The Portrait of a Graduate continues to serve as the school's "North Star," with the school's vision and instructional best practices developed collaboratively with faculty and informed by conversations with approximately 370 students.

- **[Instructional Best Practices](#)**

Every department has incorporated the instructional best practices into student learning and professional practice goals for the year. A major focus is providing students with increased opportunities for reflection within and across lessons. The Instructional Leadership Team has begun examining examples of student reflection and will use this work to support departments and the faculty later in the year.

- **Student Engagement Data**

Andy Wulf shared that VOCAL survey data shows NHS has surpassed the state average in students' perception of the relevance of their learning. School Quality Measures also show improvement in student engagement, although engagement remains an area for continued focus. He reminded the team that improving student engagement has been a main focus for the high school, particularly in the areas of students seeing relevance in what they are learning and teachers asking students for feedback.



- **Capstone Pilot**

A team of approximately 12 teachers will participate in a workshop with the Massachusetts Consortium for Innovative Education Assessment (MCIEA) to begin developing a capstone model. NHS also plans to visit a New Hampshire school with an established senior capstone program.

- **Pilot Capstone Experience**

The school is planning to offer a capstone elective to approximately 15–18 current juniors next year. Students would complete a community-based experience such as an internship or service project as part of the experience. The long-term goal is for the capstone to become a graduation requirement, with the **Class of 2030** identified as the first class that would complete a fully implemented capstone experience. Starting with this year's seniors, the Instructional Leadership Team will create a structure for each senior to tell their story relative to their educational journey and how it connects to their future plan.

- **Summary of Council Discussion**

Overall, the Council expressed support for developing a portfolio and capstone experience that gives students greater ownership of their learning and an opportunity to reflect on their growth throughout high school. Members suggested creating opportunities for students to share or present their portfolios each year as a celebration of their growth and emphasized the importance of involving students in designing the capstone process. Discussion also focused on how the experience could be incorporated into the school schedule, including the potential role of the Onward Block, and how students could be supported in identifying and curating work from across their high school experience.