MINUTES OF THE OUTREACH MEETING
OF THE NORWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

October 26, 2026

The Norwell School Committee met in the Meeting Room at Norwell Public Library on Monday, October 26, 2026. Chair Kristin McEachern called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Present were Ms. McEachern, Clerk Scott Dyke, Jana McCarthy, Elizabeth Bersell, and Superintendent Matthew Keegan. The meeting went into Executive Session at approximately 6:32 p.m., and returned to Open Session at 7:01 p.m. Vice Chair Christina Kane arrived at 6:34 p.m.

Ms. McEachern welcomed everyone to the meeting and Superintendent Keegan 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 – Henry Herman. Mr. Keegan presented the award to Henry, and Mr. Bender provided a synopsis of his high school career and accomplishments. Mr. Bender followed this by presenting students with various well-deserved awards including the MSSAA Principal's award to Nathan Ganguly; NESDEC awards to Emmet Coughlin and Travis Greenberg; NMSQT Commended Student awards were presented to Avery Baxter, Nathan Ganguly, Matteo Moretti-Fulli and Amaya Parmar; and the DAR Good Citizen was awarded to Matteo Moretti-Fulli. Mr. Bender read each award recipient's achievements prepared by school counselors. 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 ELA Curriculum Coordinator Jessica Johnston and Library Media Specialist Michelle Ready along with 10 student leaders shared the research, redesign process and rollout of the *PeerLit Summer Reading Program.* The presentation included a video clip of student group discussions. The leaders highlighted feedback from a survey from students, teachers, and parents who experienced this new student-led, choice-driven literacy initiative.

Ms. Kelly Park of the High School Boosters Club updated the Committee on the club's plans and activities, including the Labor Day Road Race, Clipper Fun Night, spirit week, and a movie presentation planned for December.

Ms. Stephanie McLaughlin named the board members for Norwell Arts. Ms. McLaughlin mentioned a field trip Norwell Arts will be funding to the play Wicked in Boston, and the upcoming play production *Once Upon Mattress* will have performances November 12 – 14, 2026.

PTO President Susan Gallagher discussed PTO activities, including various ways they have supported the teachers and students.

Mr. Bender noted that student school council member Morgan Reynolds was unable to attend, and shared the ongoing council activities. The list of Council members and meeting dates was included in agenda packets.

The outreach portion of the meeting ended at 7:45 p.m. Ms. McEachern thanked all participant volunteers, students, staff and families, and invited them to stay for regular business.

After a brief recess at approximately 7:48 p.m., Mr. Dyke moved to approve the minutes of the Executive and Regular sessions of the Norwell School Committee meeting on September 21, 2026, accounts payable warrants #13 and 14 and accounts payable and refund warrants #15, 16 and 17 signed by Ms. Kristin McEachern, additional two nurse chaperones for the trip to Washington, DC on November 4 – 6, 2026, and the International Excursion to Italy on April 12 – 23, 2028, as proposed. The motion was seconded by Ms. McCarthy and was approved unanimously: McCarthy, Aye; Kane, Aye; McEachern, Aye; Bersell, 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 swim/dive cooperative program commencing for the 2026-2027 winter season was included in agenda packets. Mr. Dyke moved, seconded by Ms. Kane, to approve the renewal of the swim/dive cooperative program, as proposed. The motion was approved unanimously: McCarthy, Aye; Kane, Aye; McEachern, Aye; Bersell, Aye; and Dyke, Aye.

Attached is an amended school calendar moving the last day of school up to June 18 and eliminating June 18 as a holiday as *Juneteenth* is June 19, 2027, and not observed the day before. Mr. Dyke moved, seconded by Ms. McCarthy, to approve the amended 2026-2027 school calendar, as proposed. The motion was approved unanimously: McCarthy, Aye; Kane, Aye; McEachern, Aye; Bersell, Aye; and Dyke, Aye.

Student Government Representative Henry Jacobs recapped recent homecoming and spirit week events at the High School. Ms. McEachern thanked Mr. Jacobs and mentioned he was welcome to leave or stay for the remainder of the meeting. Mr. Jacobs left the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

Proposals from three search firms for Superintendent were shared in the Google folder. Time was provided to discuss choosing a firm to lead the search for Mr. Keegan's replacement. Ms. McEachern and Ms. Kane led the initial search with phone calls and reference checks, and after discussion, the Committee agreed upon a search firm. Upon request for a motion from the Chair, Mr. Dyke made a motion to approve NESDEC as the firm to conduct the new Superintendent search. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bersell, and passed unanimously: McCarthy, Aye; Kane, Aye; McEachern, Aye; Bersell, Aye; and Dyke, Aye. NESDEC will be invited to attend the November meeting to discuss the search process going forward.

Mr. Keegan presented a PowerPoint outlining the *2026-2027 October 1 Enrollment and Class Size Report.* The 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. NESDEC's enrollment projections have been received and will be presented at the next meeting.

The High School Class of 2026 Update, Graduating Class Profile and SAT Summary reports were included in agenda packets. The Graduating Class Profile 1996-2026 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 2026. A total of 534 tests were taken with 279 test takers (as compared to 253 test takers in 2025) with 92.47% of scores receiving a 3 or higher - the first year the High School has ever been over 90% with students scoring a 3 or higher. There are 21 AP classes offered; the newest is Economics: Micro and Macro. Lengthy discussion ensued regarding the availability of AP classes.

Director of Teaching, Learning & Technology Meredith Erickson presented a PowerPoint which was distributed at the meeting on the 2026 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. The High School's overall classification is a MA *School of Recognition.* Fixty-six of 1,800 public schools receive the classification.

Director of Finance, Operations & Technology Warren MacCallum discussed the Independent Accountant's Report for FY'25 which was in the Google folder for the Committee's review. It will be posted on the website.

At a recent meeting, the Town Administrator and Select Board requested a preliminary FY'28 budget so they can accelerate the budget process. Utilizing PowerPoint, Mr. MacCallum presented a *Preliminary Level Service Budget for FY'28*. This report is a draft and will be posted on line. Many assumptions with knowns and unknowns that will need to be refined were included as the budget process continues. Mr. Keegan sent a letter to the staff dated on October 21, 2026 regarding the level service budget. The Town also asked Norwell Public Schools to create a level funded budget which will be presented to the School Committee during the November meeting. While Norwell Public Schools will continue to provide the Town with information, the FY'28 budget development timeline will continue as well.

Mr. Keegan stated that the SSEC Quarterly Update was enclosed in the Google folder. Mr. Keegan serves on the Board, and there has been one meeting thus far.

Ms. Bersell commented favorably on the NTSS video on the website, fall events at the schools and an event at the cemetery presented by the Historical Society. Chair McEachern mentioned that a School Building Committee meeting with the MSBA will be established in the near future. Mr. Keegan stated that Mr. MacCallum recently had a walkthrough with several designers regarding the project. Mr. Keegan attended the Athletic Hall of Fame event on October 24, 2026.

Mr. Keegan noted correspondence that was included in the Google folder: letters regarding retirement and resignation; letter from the Friends of the Homeless of the South Shore; FY'28 Budget Development Process Timeline; *Application For and Permit to Use NPS* for Annual Town Meeting and Election; and schools' newsletters since last NSC meeting.

Congress of Councils will be held at 7:00 p.m. at the Sparrell Building PD Center on October 27, 2026. The next regular meeting will be on November 16, 2026 followed by a December 14, 2026 Outreach Meeting - Cole School Presentations, both at the Norwell Public Library.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Ms. McEachern moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:20 p.m.

November 16, 2026
Kristin A. McEachern, Chair

November 16, 2026
Scott E. Dyke, Clerk