



STUDENTS AT THE LGN PAINT LEAVES IN ART CLASS #NPSPRIDE

The Lancer

Newsletter of the Superintendent's Office of the Norton Public Schools

October 2017

IN THIS ISSUE

Welcome Back!

by Dr. Joseph Baeta, Superintendent of Schools

The school year is off to a great start. Typical topics including transportation are being resolved. Thank you to all who followed procedures. We will address transportation for 2018-2019 MUCH earlier.

I wanted to reach out and communicate about our goals for this year. Our first priority is to provide for curriculum, instruction and supports that embrace the social emotional and behavioral learning of ALL students. Studies suggest, and I agree, that students today are not getting these skills. A recent article in by Julie Lythcott-Haims entitled **"Eight Skills Every Student Needs by 18"** (School Administrator, September 2017) suggests that we should have reasonable expectations for 18 year olds.

These expectations include the ability to talk to strangers, find their way around, manage assignments, workloads and deadlines, contribute to the running of a household, handle interpersonal problems, cope with ups and downs, earn and manage money, and be able to take risks. This path to success must start at an early age.

Today, we have a co-obligation between the home and school to find the age appropriate ways to support students. Too often students give up on difficult tasks or ask for

help before attempting the problem before them. Too often students don't use proper accepted protocols for asking for help without raising their voices or being angry. Too often students want the easy way out. These are in some ways norms today. I note this as both your Superintendent and as a parent. So, what can WE do about it?

The **"WE"** is the answer. Parents/Guardians and school personnel must provide a co-supported plan of action grounded in research and age appropriate acceptable practices. As a District, we plan to do so.

One of our major goals is to develop *Guidelines for Social Emotional and Behavioral Learning PreK-12*. Collectively we will develop a working document that requires your support at home. Learning is constant and just doesn't happen at school. If you believe this statement, we will achieve our goal of making sure our students have these skills.

Wishing all of our Norton families a fantastic school year! Follow me on Twitter for District news. @NortonSchools

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Business Office

by Lincoln Lynch, School Business Manager
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Transportation

The start of the year is always interesting in my office, but this year the interesting factor was multiplied by the new bus pass policy. I want to thank all bus drivers, families, and staff for their help and patience throughout the beginning of the process. There were many bumps in the road as is the case with anything new, but overall I think the process went fairly smoothly and this was possible due to the cooperation of all. Next year things will be tweaked to make the process a little smoother, and if anyone reading this has a comment or suggestion please contact me via Let's Talk or email. I have my perspective on how things have gone and what needs to change, but I always want to be able to look at it through a different lens and that is where you come in. For next year, please keep an eye out for emails regarding the 2018-2019 bus process as it will start much sooner, and the deadline for registration and payment could potentially be in June.

If you haven't registered your child for a bus pass please follow this link to do so, please go to the District's Transportation page and do so.

Budget

Budget and Capital Improvement items will be discussed at the October 23rd Town Meeting which will be held at Norton High School.

Buildings and Grounds

by Wade Lizotte, Director of Facilities

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Welcome back! The facilities department, as usual, had an incredibly busy summer. We are extremely proud of what we have accomplished. Besides our regular summer time cleaning, here is a list of some of the projects we managed to complete over the past 10 weeks.

JCS

- New key card access system
- Moved Pre School
- Installed a new filtered water bottle filling station/bubbler
- New epoxy floors in the main bathrooms and Kindergarten wing bathrooms
- New backpack and coat hooks
- Wall and trim painting



LGN

- New key card access system
- New cafeteria tables purchased
- Paved final coat to the parking lot
- Moved Pre School
- Painted several classroom doors, walls and trim

HAY

- Painted Principal's Office
- Painted Superintendent's conference room
- Replaced broken VCT in hallways
- Painted all exterior doors, overhangs and front poles

NMS

- New Epoxy Ramp
- Rugs removed and VCT installed in classrooms - first and second floor
- New Fire Panel installed
- Painted cafeteria wall

NHS

- New burglar alarm system installed
- New gym pads installed
- Loamed, leveled off and seeded football stadium field
- Paving extra parking spaces behind the HS
- Wall and trim painting

District Wide

- Weeded and mulched
- Swept parking lots
- Completed district wide LED bulb replacement program. All buildings now have new interior LED lighting.

We also hosted in our schools this summer:

- LGN – Summer school
- NHS – Enrichment program and HS sport teams
- HAY – Champions Summer program
- NMS – Basketball and Soccer camps
- JCS – The PGA child care program

The schools and grounds all look fantastic. We were ready to invite both staff and students back for a brand new school year.

Office of Teaching and Learning

By Jennifer O'Neill, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning

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Professional Learning

Throughout the course of the year, the District uses early release days in order to provide our staff with quality professional learning. This time is extremely valuable to our staff as they review and improve curriculum, receive training on technology and social emotional learning, and collaborate with their colleagues. Our goals for the current school year focus on creating safe and welcoming schools through quality practices around social emotional learning, meaningful integration of technology, and improving classroom instruction with implementation of new programs. We know these days can be challenging for families as your students are home and may need childcare, so we thank you for your support in helping us to provide quality professional learning for all staff.

So that you may better prepare, here is a list of the remaining early release days for professional learning.

- October 27th
- January 26th
- May 18th

Curriculum Updates Elementary Literacy

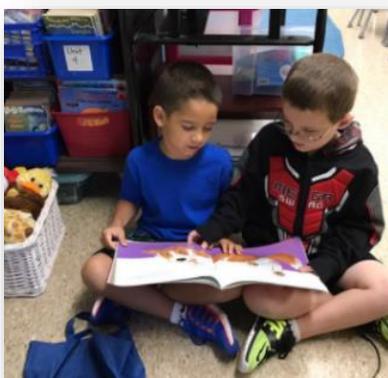
This year, all students in K-5 are using the Readers Workshop model in our classrooms. Many of our students participated in the workshop model last year during our initial pilot. The Lucy Calkins Workshop model is used for reading. Our goal is to step up students' reading work to higher levels of agency and independence.

What does a workshop look like?

A reading or writing workshop has some basic parts. It begins with a whole class mini-lesson that teaches a specific skill or target. Students then use most of the workshop time independently reading or writing. While students are reading or writing, the teacher meets with individual students to conference on skills and also with small groups of students to practice a target or discuss a shared book. The workshop ends with a wrap up whole group meeting.

How is a workshop approach different from other language arts programs?

In the workshop, there are rarely book reports, reading quizzes or vocabulary worksheets. Instead there are book talks, read-alouds, conversations on strategies, discussions about great books and great writing, lots of reading and writing time, choice and the satisfaction of finishing a great read or piece of writing.



How will my child be assessed? How will I know he/she is making progress?

Your child has taken the STAR reading assessment in previous grades. Their Spring score, along with standardized fall testing will be used as a baseline to measure growth when compared to later assessments throughout the year. We also use Teacher College Assessments to determine their Guided Reading Level (A-Z). We will be assessing each child during the first couple weeks of school to determine their guided reading level or reading ceiling (highest level of independent reading). Your child's reading ceiling is his/her beginning instructional level and will be periodically re-assessed to measure continued progress. Additionally, the DRA will be used to assess reading fluency (speed & accuracy). Anecdotal records of targets, instructional strategies used and goals met will also be noted on an ongoing basis. Reading is reported a reading rubric used.

What can I do to support my child at home?

The one factor that will have the greatest impact is to give your child the gift of time. At home, your child will be expected to read at least 20-30 minutes daily. To be successful with the reading program it is also important to make sure your child is reading books at his/her level. We will help the students do this in the classroom. However, if you are looking for a book or want to check a book's level, you may find it helpful to go to the "Scholastic" website and search for a title's "guided reading level" under "Book Wizard". We have links to these sites on our class websites too.

Word Study

In grades K-3, Your child will continue to participate in the Foundations word study program this year. Although word study is only one of the many daily literacy activities in our classroom, this instruction provides students with a valuable tool in the complex task of learning to read, comprehend, and enjoy a variety of texts.

In Word Study and Vocabulary lessons, students learn strategies for decoding, spelling, and understanding the meaning of multi-syllabic words. Every week, we'll review and practice previously taught skills while explore important new ones. Students will also participate in frequent, brief assessments in spelling, word meaning, and word analysis so that we can immediately address learning needs.



Student Services

by Jeanne Sullivan, Director of Pupil Personnel Services

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Welcome Back! I hope you had a fun, family filled summer. To start the year off, I would like to introduce you to some of our new staff or staff who are filling new roles in the PPS Department.

Laura Zanowski, Assistant Director of Special Education

Ms. Zanowski is replacing the position previously held by Mr. Mikolazyk. She comes to us with a background working as a special educator and administrator in both public and private school settings. As Assistant Director, Ms. Zanowski is responsible for managing cases of students served in out of district placements as well as in-district specialized programs. She can be reached in the Pupil Personnel Office at the H. A. Yelle School at 508-286-2623 or by email at: lzanowski@norton.k12.ma.us.

Kyla Moran, Director of Guidance 9-12

Ms. Moran has shifted her position as NHS Guidance Counselor to Director of Guidance 9-12. We are excited to have Ms. Moran leading our Guidance Department, coordinating with building administration and teachers to support the programming and needs of our high school students.

Kristine Kefor, JCS Assistant Principal/ Early Childhood Coordinator

In her new role, Mrs. Kefor is supporting Mrs. Bolton, JCS Building Principal and leading our Project Early Preschool Program. Mrs. Kefor has been very helpful and supportive to families and staff in the transition of Project Early from LGN to JCS.

Christin McLernon, COTA is joining us as a long term substitute filling in while Jessica Lowe, COTA completes her practicum for OT licensure. Ms. McLernon has worked with children with various disabilities in both the private practice and school settings. She will be working under the supervision of Mrs. Bergstrom, OTR.

Jaclyn Bournazian, SLPA is replacing Jenna Berthiume, SLPA. Ms. Bournazian has a well-rounded background working with children and comes highly recommended. She will be working primarily at the preschool level under the supervision of Mrs. Norcliffe, SLP.

In next month's edition of The Lancer, I will introduce you to the staff changes to our teaching and paraprofessional staff.

Project Early Move Complete

The Project Early Program has relocated from the L. G. Nourse School to the J. C. Solmonese School. I want to thank all of the program and district staff who worked so hard at the end of last school year and over the summer to make this move happen. It's so nice to see all of the Project Early classrooms all together in the Marlin Unit at JCS. The classrooms are beautiful!!



Preschool Survey

We are in the process of examining our preschool model and would love your input. Please consider completing the Preschool Interest Survey at <https://goo.gl/forms/nQnjZFo455RIITJo2> to provide your input and feedback. This survey will remain open until Oct. 6, 2017. Thank you in advance for your input.

SEPAC

The Norton SEPAC (Special Education Parent Advisory Council) is looking for new members. The SEPAC meets bi-monthly. Past topics have included: Parent procedural safeguards, Transition to adulthood, Activities to do with your child in the summer, Coffee hour with the Director of PPS and Assistant Director of Special Education, etc... We are always looking for new ideas and topics of interest to parents. If you are interested and would like more information, please contact Jeanne Sullivan, Director of Pupil Personnel Services at 508-285-0193 or Hannah Morrison, SEPAC Chairperson at hlmorrison@comcast.net

Thank you ESY Staff

We had a very successful Extended School Year Program this past summer. Thank you to Mrs. Jestus, Mrs. Karcis, and all program staff for your hard work.

Coordinated Program Review

The Norton Public Schools will be undergoing a Coordinated Program Review (CPR) of our procedures and practices related to Special Education, Civil Rights and English Language Learners. The CPR will be conducted by staff from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. This full review process is completed every 6 years and includes examination of our procedures, review of student records, tours of all NPS buildings, interviews of NPS administrators, staff, and SEPAC members. In order to gain input from families, the review team from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will be sending out a survey via email to families of all students receiving special education services. Please keep your eye out for this important survey. If you do not have email, please contact the PPS Office at 508-285-0193 and we will request the Department send a hard copy of the survey to you.

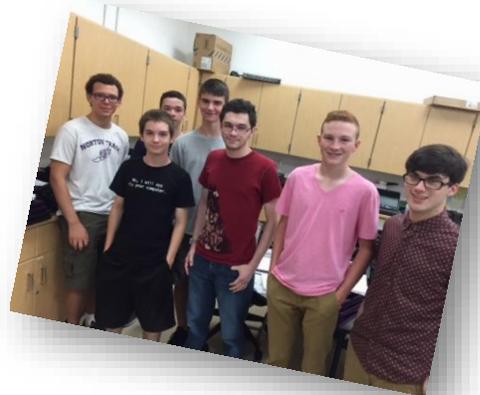
Technology

by Karen Winsper, Director of Instructional Technology

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Chromebook Update

Students in grades 6 through 10 have been provided HP Chromebooks in conjunction with our 1:1 initiative. By providing devices to students who choose to participate in the program, the District has given access to modern learning tools students might not have otherwise. This doesn't mean students are only learning with the new technology. On the contrary, we trust our teachers to utilize the Chromebooks when it matches their instructional goals. We will continue to build upon our experiences and adjust as needed.



Students in the Information Technology and Innovation class (pictured at right) at Norton High School were instrumental in distributing Chromebooks to freshman and sophomores during the first few weeks of school. The technology department couldn't have done it without them—we greatly appreciate their help and look forward to all of the support they'll offer the students and staff at NHS throughout the year ahead.

If your child has a problem with their school issued Chromebook, they should visit the Guidance Office to see Mrs. Maclean at NMS or visit Mrs. Young in the library at NHS. A loaner device will be issued while it is evaluated for repair needs.

Technology Professional Learning for Staff

Over the summer, many staff members attended training sessions to expand their knowledge of technology to support their curriculum. Google Classroom, HyperDocs, Google Tools, iPads in the Elementary Classroom, and creating & publishing student creations were explored over the summer months. Some staff also participated in

the District's online book study group reading *Teach Like a Pirate* by Dave Burgess. Norton is very fortunate to have teachers who presented technology topics to their colleagues on the back-to-school PD day. We're also excited to have many staff members presenting on technology topics to support teaching and learning at regional conferences in the coming months.



Technology Committee

Our group consists of staff from across the District who are interested in shaping the direction of technology use in our schools. We'll focus on Digital Citizenship, innovation, integration, the District's Technology Plan and Strategic Plan, and more this upcoming school year. Meetings will take place on Wednesdays and we'll rotate locations. The first meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 11th from 3:45-4:45 at the JCS library. We would love for members of the community to join our group. If you are interested in joining us, please contact Karen at (508)285-0100 x9 or send an email.

Visit the Technology webpage for more information about our department: <http://www.norton.k12.ma.us/district/technology> and don't hesitate to contact us via Let's Talk through the NPS website or via email.