



MS. TAYLOR'S STUDENTS AT THE JC SOLMONESE SHOWING OFF THEIR CRAZY SOCKS

The Lancer

Newsletter of the
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IN THIS ISSUE

Office of the Superintendent

by Dr. Joseph Baeta, Superintendent of Schools

"A Tale of Two Cities" by Dickens may be a good title for the current state of education funding in MA and specifically in Norton. I think the title is reflective of what is happening in public education.

Public education in Norton and in most, but not all, communities is under significant scrutiny because of expenses. We can argue "for evah" about increasing taxes not being the resolution to fixing this problem. However, if we look at the financial data most would probably shake their heads at what is happening. Go to www.norton.k12.ma.us and the "Transparency Center" directly in the middle of the page and it will provide you with audited financials and student outcomes that show the true story. Let me also provide some thoughts.

The Commonwealth has done little to support local communities, and especially Norton, to help support ALL students. An increase to over 160 communities of \$20-\$50 per student per year just doesn't do it. Moreover, we are in an age of making difficult decisions because of mandates vs. needs vs. wants. I use these three categories because I believe that budgets within education are about choosing between needs and wants because mandates are NOT up for debate. However, many, if not most, taxpayers do not understand the difference between mandates, needs and wants. Let me attempt to provide some clarity.

Mandates: Federal mandates have been around for decades but lately state mandates have become the norm. *-continued on page 2-*

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Elected officials pass bills that are usually very grounded in supporting urban and rural districts. However, they usually just add to the expense line and do not fix the problem. As important, suburban communities like Norton follow these mandates as well but with NO financial support. Maybe we don't even have that demographic or issue. I'm not blaming, just noting. For example, Special Education is not a choice as our students, regardless of academic and social emotional issues, are "our students" in the schools and YOUR responsibility as a taxpayer. We recognize our end quite clearly BUT taxpayers do not. Nor do they want too.

Needs: This topic requires the ability to be competitive within the new age of "parent choice." Families can now send their child to a traditional PreK-12 public school, a charter school, a private school, online or blended, vocational-technical, agricultural, and P.M. or night school. Moreover, each of these EXCEPT traditional PreK-12 have all kinds of marketing and public relations supports as a way to "sell themselves" to families and even taxpayers without children in the schools. There is an online school that notes that it is "free." Nothing is free! It is charged back to where the student lives.

The "Need" is the ability to offer programming that is both competitive and selective. Traditional PreK-12 public schools like Norton Public Schools at times can't compete. For example, I may be increasing the budget at 5% via an open process with the Finance Committee and Town Meeting with all kinds of open meetings to discuss why such a request. All of the others have NO such process. The bill comes and it is paid. No questioning of line items, contracts, fees, etc., etc., etc.

Wants: This is all about how do we become the best traditional public school in the area. Yes, going for the "Gold" is the only way we can move forward. Yet, many have told me directly that finishing in the "Top 10" or going for a "B" is good enough. That is incredible to me. Since when does any parent, grandparent, neighbor or community member just want to go for second best? It is evident that some do.

My goal is to establish the "want" but get at least the "need" because I have no choice when it comes to "mandates." Our budget for FY19 is reflective of this.

In the end school budgets and town budgets are about choices and not wants and needs. Which community do you choose to live in because it will not take long to have the community you don't want to live in. Get involved. Go for the gold or go home!

Business Office

by Lincoln Lynch, School Business Manager

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The Norton School Committee's FY19 operating budget recommendation has been submitted to Norton's Finance Committee, Board of Selectmen and Town Manager. The final recommendation requests a 10.82% increase to the current FY18 budget for a total FY19 recommended budget of \$30,181,944 or a \$2,946,383 increase. The recommended budget keeps all current staff, includes mandated positions, an increase in out of district special education tuitions, increase in utility costs, increase in transportation per contract, 6.0 additional positions and makes an attempt to get back to where supplies and materials had been funded in previous years. We believe this budget serves all students and provides the tools and inspiration to succeed at the highest level.

Bus registration for next school year (2018-2019) will be available ONLINE ONLY after the April 9th School Committee meeting. An email will go out to all parents with information and a link to the online form. **ALL STUDENTS** who intend to take the bus next school year must fill out a form. The deadline for registration will be June 30th. Those who register after the June 30th deadline will not be guaranteed a seat on a bus but will be considered for transportation based on availability prior to the first day of school. The fee for bussing is \$350 per rider.

Buildings and Grounds

by Wade Lizotte, Director of Facilities

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February 2018 left us with several inches of snow and we were all so eager to welcome in March. Well now that March is almost over and Spring has officially arrived, we look back on four nor'easters in less than three weeks. These storms created havoc on our town and our facilities. Our buildings continued to face the extreme elements and lose power over and over again. It really put our equipment and staff members to the test. Running five school buildings is not an easy task when the weather is nice. When mother nature throws this at us, it really does take its toll. We continue to maintain our equipment to the best of our abilities and I know it really helped us get through this winter.

School safety has continued to be the hot topic here in the District as well. We have just finished adding several new cameras. We also added 12 new portable radios, giving the school department 89 radios in all. These radios are used for communication throughout all five schools as well as the capability to contact the PD, FD, DPW and bus drivers. We are currently installing new signs all around our buildings and property. The custodians will continue to walk the buildings checking exterior doors throughout all shifts. NPS is always reviewing and adjusting our safety protocols. The highest priority in our schools will always be the safety and security of our students and staff.

Office of Teaching and Learning

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

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Author in Residence

Norton Public Schools welcomed poet Brett Fleishman as an Author in Residence March 26th- 28th. Brett has written 3 poetry books for kids at the primary, intermediate and advanced levels. His next four children's poetry books will be published this year. Brett spent one full day in each of our elementary schools to work in groups with Kindergarten through Grade 5 students to share his love of poetry and his process. It was a wonderful to have Brett in our District!



Save the Date!

Screening for students registered to attend Kindergarten in September will take place on June 6th. All screenings will take place at the J. C. Solmonese Elementary School. Appointment times will be mailed to families by mid-May.



Student Services

by Jeanne Sullivan, Director of Pupil Personnel Services

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Crazy Sock Day

On Wednesday, March 20 & Thursday, March 21 all Norton Public Schools celebrated Crazy Sock Day to celebrate World Down Syndrome Day. In addition to wearing their crazy socks, students in some of our schools learned about celebrating differences and accepting others through designing crazy socks, writing letters and performing acts of kindness. Here is a link to an educational video about Down Syndrome that was shown in some of our programs <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5M--xOyGUX4>



Light it Up Blue!

April is Autism Awareness Month. On April 2nd, Public Schools will be celebrating "Light it Up Blue" by wearing blue for Autism Awareness. On April 27 we will participate in the "Walk in Red" to celebrate Autism Acceptance. Through participating in these events we hope to continue building acceptance of differences and understanding that we are all special. Here are some links to videos about Autism <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RuV8AddbXIs> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mtRYKjucDHk>

NOPE - Norton Opioid Prevention Coalition

Nope will be hosting a candlelight vigil to raise awareness of the ongoing opioid crisis. This vigil will be held on April 4, 2018 at 7:00PM in the H. A. Yelle School Cafeteria.

Special Olympics

This year the Attleboro Area Special Olympics will be held on June 5th (Rain date: June 8th). Look for information coming from the schools soon.



Special Olympics

Direct Services vs. Consultation Services

As a district we have been discussing our models of service delivery to students. One of the point of conversation has been the differences between direct services and consultation services. Most people are used to the idea of direct services where a teacher of therapist will work directly with a student in individual or small group settings to provide services to a student. This model of service delivery helps promote the skill in the small group or individual setting but doesn't lend itself well to generalization of skills.

Another model of service delivery is consultation. In this model the teacher or therapist will observe the student regularly, may work with them individually on occasion and meet with the staff working with them to review the student goals and strategies to be implemented throughout the students' day in all settings to help the student reach their goals. This model of consultation leads to improved consistency and generalization of skills.

I have provided a link to an article published by the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired which will help to further explain this difference. <http://www.tsbvi.edu/seehear/spring08/related.html> After reviewing the article if you have questions about how this relates directly to your child, please talk with your child's team.

Technology Department

by Karen Winsper, Director of Instructional Technology

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MCAS Testing

The technology department supports students and teachers in grades 4-8 during the online MCAS tests. Our team is available within the schools in case there are login problems, wireless connectivity issues, charging concerns, and for general support. Students are able to take the test with their District provided chromebook. If a student brings their own device to school, they will need to borrow one of ours on the testing days. Some students prefer to use a mouse rather than just the track pad and they can utilize one during MCAS. For the first time this year, selected students at Norton High School will be taking the MCAS online trial in addition to the regular ELA test. Please encourage your child to charge their device each night in preparation for MCAS online testing.



iPads + Green Screens = Learning Fun!

Each school has access to tools to create with green screen technology. Using the Do Ink iPad app, students and teachers from kindergarten through high school are able to easily transport themselves to another place and time or simply share a story. Students are first photographed or recorded in front of a green screen. Next the green background is replaced with an image or video. Finally, the project can be saved and shared-it's that simple. Students in Miss Carlson's 1st grade at LGN have been utilizing the green screen with their literature studies.



Mrs. Ryan's 2nd grade students at the JCS explored figurative language and tied in the green screen.



Mrs. Carline's 4th graders at the HAY recently recorded book reviews using the Padcaster and green screen.



Ms. Skowronek's 7th grade students filmed original scripts including original characters they developed for class.



The possibilities are endless!