



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

November 2017

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3RD GRADE STUDENTS IN MISS GOODRICH'S CLASS DURING MORNING STATIONS #NPSPRIDE

Social Emotional Learning

by Dr. Joseph Baeta, Superintendent of Schools

The well-being of children may be something that we need to reconsider in our approach to education. For far too long, we have been under the guidelines of assessment scores and accountability. I am all for a reasonable test and accountability, but not at this cost. Let me explain.

One of our key goals for this year is to review, develop and implement social-emotional and behavioral learning guidelines by June 2018. An SEL Advisory Committee is being organized district wide. Further, we will have a District Wide Data, Information and Survey Committee consisting of three administrators. This committee will be led by Jennifer O'Neill, Assistant Superintendent. The role of this committee is to provide each school and the District data, information, and surveys about the key skills for developing student SEL.

The third part of this process is to implement School Based Culture and

Climate Committees which will be co-chaired by the principal and a teacher. Each grade will have a representative. The goal of this committee is to use the guidelines developed by the Advisory Committee and data/information and build upon the needs of students and staff.

This triangulation is grounded in what a colleague of mine calls "leading up." It is an opportunity for my office to provide our staff with the flexibility to develop our needs and implement them. This will create a "bottom up" process which allows for those in the trenches to potentially provide the answers to critical issues within our schools. It is data driven, child centered and most importantly local to each school's needs.

We will keep you posted on a regular basis. Follow me on Twitter for District news. @NortonSchools

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Business Office

by Lincoln Lynch, School Business Manager
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2018-2019 Budget

Believe it or not, budget talks will begin over the next couple months for next school year. Administrators, principals and academic coordinators will collaborate in order to present a budget to the Norton School Committee that serves all students in our District. School Committee will vote on the proposed budget around the end of February after multiple presentations and a Saturday budget meeting. The School Committee approved budget is then sent to the Town Manager's office the second week of March.

October Town Meeting

We are very pleased with the positive outcome of the vote on Town Meeting articles that were approved by Norton residents on October 23rd. The following were approved:

1. \$129,256 for classroom supplies/materials, curriculum needs and accounting software upgrades
2. \$25,000 for security cameras Districtwide
3. \$25,000 for doors and locks Districtwide
4. \$37,000 for roof repairs at the Middle School
5. \$200,000 to conduct schematic design studies for a potential window and door replacement project at the HAY, JCS and LGN in partnership with the Massachusetts School Building Authority

Buildings and Grounds

by Wade Lizotte, Director of Facilities

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The building and grounds department keeps the theme of "checking things off our list" as we head into November.

At the High School we have finished the paving project by adding 70 new spaces along the side and back of the building. We also completed the installation of three new bleacher stands and installed the new gym wall pads.

At the Yelle School we finished the front circle flagpole restoration project.

At the LG Nourse we finished the installation of the bubbler/water bottle filling station and

removed a tree that was leaning out by the back playground area.

At the JC Solmonese School we installed all new parking lot signs and painted traffic flow arrows.

At the Middle School the stage area was painted and stage light bulbs were replaced. We are ready for the upcoming drama season.

Outside our buildings the grounds department have started their Fall cleanup of seeding, fertilizing, cutting back trees limbs, shrubs and removing leaves, lots of leaves. We also shut down the playing fields' sprinkler systems.

We had our town's Building Department and Fire Department inspections and passed both. We also included our school resource officer, Sergeant Dennett, on these walk-throughs so that we could look at potential lock down issues and address them.



Office of Teaching and Learning

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

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MCAS Results

On Monday October 30th, student MCAS results from the spring of 2017 were mailed home to families. As noted in our letter to families, the 2017 administration was the first year of the Next-Generation MCAS assessment in Grades 3-8 and therefore the results are different than those we have seen in years past.

- The new MCAS focuses on students' critical thinking abilities, application of knowledge, and ability to make connections between reading and writing
- New achievement levels and scores have been replaced and both staff and families need to adjust to these new norms. They are: Exceeding Expectations (530-560), Meeting Expectations (500-529), Partially Meeting Expectations (470-499), and Not Meeting Expectations (440-469).
- The 2017 results are being considered a baseline for the Next-Generation MCAS the first year of a new assessment- and we can expect scores to change over time, as occurred when the legacy MCAS debuted in 1998.
- The results do not mean that students learned less; the Next-Generation MCAS measures in a different way.

In the Spring of 2018, students in grades 3-8 will continue to participate in the Next-Generation MCAS assessment, with the grades 5 & 8 science assessment transitioning to the new assessment as well. Grade 10

students will continue to take the legacy MCAS at this time.

As you know, we have a strong belief in the academic, social emotional, civic, and athletic well-being of our students. We want our students to succeed at the current and next grade level. As important, we want them to be successful citizens. This is why our constant philosophy with attention to access, equity, social emotional and behavioral learning, and accountability is the very reason why we take into consideration all assessments and results and not just one state assessment. However, we will also hold ourselves and students to improving in all categories. We hope you agree!

We know that many parents may have questions about this new assessment, so we have scheduled a community forum to address any concerns on Tuesday, November 14th at 6:30pm in the Norton High School auditorium.

Parent Conferences

Over the next few weeks, all schools will be holding parent conferences in order to give teachers and parents the opportunity to discuss student progress.

JCS/LGN/HAY

- Report Cards: Monday, November 13th
- Parent Conferences: Wednesday, November 15th & Thursday, November 16th

Norton Middle School

- Parent Conferences: Wednesday, November 7th & Thursday, November 8th

Norton High School

- Report Cards: Monday, November 13th
- Parent Conferences: Thursday, November 16th

Student and Staff

Climate Surveys

In partnership with Panorama Education, the District will be conducting school climate and culture surveys with students in Grades 3-10 during the week of November 6th. These surveys will ask students grade appropriate questions around school climate, engagement, school belonging, the value of school, their mindset about school, and how safe they feel while in school.

All surveys conducted will be done anonymously and give the district information about the way students at each of our buildings perceive the school community and their learning experiences. There will be no identifying information collected from students and there is no way to trace answers back to individuals.

The staff of Norton Public Schools will also take a similar survey during the week of November 13th to gather information about their perceptions of school culture, administrative support, and availability of resources. All information will be used to inform our District Social Emotional and Behavioral Learning Advisory Committee.

If you have any questions about the survey or your child's participation, please contact the Office of Teaching & Learning.

Student Services

by Jeanne Sullivan, Director of Pupil Personnel Services
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SEPAC

The first meeting of the SEPAC will be on **Monday, November 20 from 6:00pm-7:30pm** in the Pupil Personnel Office at the H. A. Yelle School. This meeting will be a coffee hour/organizational meeting. We are continuing to seek new members to help develop a brochure, develop programming for families. This group is open to all families in the District and serves as an advisory council to the Director of Pupil Personnel and the School Committee. In addition, the SEPAC offers regular trainings and events to help address the unique needs of families with students with disabilities. Topics being discussed for this year include: How to read/understand your child's IEP, Parent Procedural Safeguards, Coffee Hours with the PPS Director, and more!



L.U.C.K.-Lancers United for Community Knowledge

On **Wednesday, November 30 from 6-8** in the Norton Middle School Library, the District will be holding a community coffee hour with Dr. Barry Plummer, Clinical Psychologist. The topic for the evening will be a discussion of increased anxiety and social emotional issues in childhood and adolescence, signs to look for, and when to be concerned. 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!!

Destruction of Records

Letters regarding the destruction of special education records have been sent to the families of students who were terminated from special education services as of the end of the 2010-2011 school year. If you would like to pick up your child's record, please contact the Pupil Personnel Services Office at 508-285-0194. All special education records that have not been picked up by December 1, 2017 will be destroyed.

Social Emotional Development

Over the past year, I have grown increasingly concerned about student's

mental health and social emotional development. The research shows that difficulty with these areas can arise sometimes seemingly out of the blue and does not discriminate around socio-economic status, race, sex, etc... It's important that we as adults educate ourselves and be sensitive to this when working with our children. Below are links to a couple of the articles and resources that I have found helpful.

<http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/ever-y-child-needs>

<http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/anxiety-disorders.html#>

If you have concerns about your child, please don't hesitate to contact their pediatrician, therapist, school counselor or teacher. It truly takes a village to raise our children and keep them healthy and safe.



Looking for other resources, follow me on Twitter @NPSPPS

Staff Updates

Last month, I introduced administrators and therapists who joined our staff. This month, I would like to introduce you to teaching and paraprofessional staff who have joined us. Many of these people are replacing staff who have moved on or are long term substitutes for staff who are on a leave. Norton Public Schools is lucky to have these professionals join us.



J. C. Solmonese School

Mrs. Jennifer Wakeling - Preschool Teacher
 Ms. Elizabeth Pietrasiewicz - Preschool Paraprofessional
 Ms. Leeann LeClaire - Preschool Paraprofessional

L. G. Nourse School

Ms. Caitlin Brides - Special Education Teacher - BEST Program
 Ms. Julie Felton - Paraprofessional - BEST Program
 Ms. Sharon Gauvin - 1:1 Paraprofessional
 Mrs. Diana Savage - Team Chairperson - Project Early Preschool-JCS / K-3-LGN

H.A. Yelle School

Ms. Kaitlyn Reardon - 1:1 Paraprofessional

Norton Middle School

Samantha Sherman - STEP Program
 Mrs. Patricia Kalicki - Grade 7 Special Education

Norton High School

Allison Warren - Guidance Counselor
 Mr. Timothy Sheehan - Paraprofessional
 Ms. Jennifer Dutra - Paraprofessional

Technology Department

by Karen Winsper, Director of Instructional Technology

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1/4/18

Chromebook Update

One question that has come up regarding the chromebooks: can they be connected to a printer at home? The answer is yes-if you have a wireless printer. Students can visit the Chrome web store to download the HP Print for Chrome extension <https://goo.gl/pByC1Q> Once installed, students will need to connect their Chromebook to the same wireless network as their printer to be able to print documents.



We have some very tech savvy students in Norton. Several have been utilizing the Chrome developer tools provided by Google to inspect, debug, and edit html elements directly within the Chrome browser. Although any changes made would not be permanent unless made to a personally owned website, we've had to block the developer tools in our domain. Some students have edited online content and tried to pass it off as real. Changes can be made to any website including the Schoolbrains Community Portal. If you typically view the Portal by having your child login and show you their grades, just **refresh the browser** to be sure what you're viewing is accurate. If you have any questions, please reach out to kwinsper@norton.k12.ma.us or via Let's Talk.

If your child's Chromebook needs to be sent out for repair, they can visit the library at NHS and the guidance office at NMS to drop it off. A loaner device will be provided while their device is being fixed. Thank you for your patience as repairs often take 3-4 weeks to complete.

Elementary Library Media

The Norton Public Schools was able to hire a certified library media specialist to work between the LG Nourse and JC Solmonese Schools at the start of the school year. This shifted the world language position at JCS and LGN that remained unfilled due to lack of qualified candidates to the librarian. We were thrilled to hire Ms. Julie Durmis, a certified library teacher, to open our primary libraries this year! She follows a planned library curriculum that supports the literacy curriculum of our District and the inclusion of information literacy standards as recommended by the American Association of School Librarians. Ms. Durmis will work to automate both libraries—something that has never been done at LGN and JCS! She is working with teaching staff to determine what books and materials are needed to improve the libraries for our students. We thank the many parent volunteers who have worked countless hours to keep the libraries open during difficult times.

Library Mission

Partner with parents and community to empower each student to be critical thinkers, enthusiastic readers, skillful researchers, and ethical users of information preparing them to be productive and responsible global citizens in the 21st century.

As part of the L.U.C.K. program, [Katie Greer](#) will be visiting our schools on January 4th to share her insights on "Keeping Kids Safe in Our Technology Driven World." Katie will present during the day to students and will host an evening event for adults. More details will be shared in early December.

MassCUE Conference

Every October, educators from across New England attend the Massachusetts Computer Using Educators ([MassCUE](#)) Conference held at Gillette Stadium. In support of our efforts to improve innovative teaching practices, Norton Public Schools sent representatives from each of our buildings to attend the 35th annual conference. In addition, twelve staff members and two students made presentations to conference attendees on various technology related topics as noted below. We are very proud of our staff and students for sharing their knowledge at this prestigious event!



- *Making a Difference! 3D Printed Tactile Picture Books* by Margo Bridges and students, Emmalee and Kaitlyn Schepis
- *Meaningful Social Media Engagement in Schools* by Kristine and Todd Kefor
- *Getting Our Ducks in a Row: Leveraging Technology to Balance Executive Functioning and SEL* by Michele Baeta and Kimberly Zajac
- *Real World Meets Digital World: Blending the Rules of Engagement* by Kimberly Zajac, Tracy McGarry, and Jennifer Skowronek
- *Got Game? Using Tech to Gamify Your Class* by Christina Scilingo
- *Just Chrome It! Our Team Approach to 1:1* by Dr. Joseph Baeta, Vincent Hayward, Lincoln Lynch and Karen Winsper