



**MEETING OF THE
NORTHAMPTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION SUBCOMMITTEE**
Monday, January 13, 2025 ♦ 5:18 pm - 6:01 pm



Minutes

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| Approved: May 5, 2025 |
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Attending: Gwen Agna, Chair; Anne Hennessey; Margaret Miller
Also Attending: Superintendent Bonner; Michael Stein

Documents Reviewed
Superintendent’s Goals, 2024 - 2026

1. **Notice that Meeting is Being Audio/Video Recorded - [Recording](#)**
2. **Roll Call** - Member Agna called the meeting to order at 5:18 pm and the roll was called. This hybrid meeting took place in Room 103, JFK School, and by videoconference.

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| Gwen Agna, Chair | Present |
| Anne Hennessey | Present |
| Margaret Miller | Present |
| QUORUM | Present |

3. **Minutes Approval** - Member Hennessey made a motion, seconded by Member Miller, to approve the October 7, 2024 meeting minutes. The roll call vote follows.

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| Gwen Agna, Chair | Aye |
| Anne Hennessey | Aye |
| Margaret Miller | Aye |
| QUORUM | Aye 3 |

4. **Quarterly Update of Superintendent's Goals for 2024-2025 Evaluation** - Dr. Bonner reported that she had shared her evidence folder with the Subcommittee.

Goal 1: Implement action steps to obtain objectives of strategic plan.

Benchmark Evidence:

1. Establishment of work groups with expected outcomes.
2. Caregiver/Staff outreach with Strategic Plan roadshow
3. District-wide three-tiered system for academic and behavioral supports (MTSS).
4. Pre-K-12 Literacy Plan
5. 3-Year Professional Development **Plan for the District**

Dr. Bonner reported that workgroups are being formed, but this process has been slowed by work on the budget and negotiations. The Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Kate Messmer, is working with the professional development group and the Director of Student Services to set up the MTSS group. Kate Messmer has also been meeting with the literacy coach and interventionists about the Pre-K - 12 Literacy Plan and that group should be up and running by the end of the month. A group exists for wraparound services. 170 caregiver survey responses have been received. Mistelle Hannah is leading a group on food services. Strategic Plan road show was completed in December.

Goal 2: Develop an NPS budget process and budget that meets the needs of our students and district goals.

Benchmark Evidence:

1. Work with the Budget & Property Chair to establish a schedule/timeline for the budget presentation
2. Administrators and Department heads input to the FY26 and FY27 budget
3. Prepare three views of the budget - **overall 4% target, level-funded, and administrators' request. For FY27 - overall 3.5% target, level funded, administrators request**
4. Project a three-year budget output that's level funded and considers economic conditions

Dr. Bonner reported that the budget is the focus of Central Office work. She has been meeting with principals and directors to review their budgets. Matt Holloway is joining meetings because special education is such a large piece of the budget. It is hoped that a draft budget will be prepared by late-January or early-February. The budget then goes to the ALT team. Three budgets will be presented, i.e., the City's 4% target budget; level service; and a dream budget.

Goal 3: Personal professional learning to grow leadership skills and improve performance in the role as superintendent

1. Continue participating in NSIP (monthly meetings)
2. Meet with coach monthly
3. SEI course for administration shelter english instruction
4. Conference attendance at MASS, MASC/Joint Conferences
5. Serve as representative on Women's Educational Leadership Network for the region

Benchmark Evidence:

1. Monthly meeting agendas and attendance
2. SEI course completion
3. Feedback from conference attendance

Dr. Bonner reported continued participation in the New Superintendent Induction Program as well as meetings with her coach, Michael Sullivan. She is also the regional representative for the Women's Educational Leadership Network. She completed her certificate in Massachusetts Sheltered English Instruction. She attends MASC and MASS conferences.

A grid is in the folder that shows milestones and progress to goals.

Standard I: Instructional Leadership

SP Objective 4: *Improve ELA and math outcomes for English learners, students with disabilities, low-income students, and students identifying as Hispanic or Latino.*

IB Instruction

1. Continuation of implementation of new EL - ELA curriculum and IM - math curriculum for the elementary grades. Currently in year 2 of implementation.

Benchmark evidence:

- a. classroom observations
 - b. growth on district assessments from BOY to EOY kindergarten - eighth grade
2. Development of prek-12 Literacy Plan for the district that is a comprehensive, coherent and aligned high quality instruction within the guise of Science of Reading. This will be developed in collaboration with the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, literacy coach, reading interventionists, and department chairs.

Benchmark evidence: Prek-12 Literacy Plan Guidelines

Dr. Bonner reported that she will visit classrooms looking for key items to make sure the ELA and math program are being implemented. There will be two working groups to develop the literacy plan.

Standard I: Instructional Leadership

SP Objective 4: *Improve ELA and math outcomes for English learners, students with disabilities, low-income students, and students identifying as Hispanic or Latino.*

ID Evaluation

1. Support to administrators - there are three (3) new principals, director of student services and director of curriculum and instruction to support as they acclimate to the district and some to their position.

Benchmark evidence: biweekly check-ins with new principals, conduct classroom observations together with all principals, provide feedback, set goals for evaluation, provide coaching opportunities/mentor assignment, provide professional development opportunities and PLC

2. Work with the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, NASE and DESE to update the evaluation process for unit A.

Benchmark evidence: Updated evaluation plan for Unit A

Dr. Bonner reported that principals' goals are nearly finalized as are the school improvement plans. Dr. Bonner intends to create a public-facing document for each school and department describing what has been requested and how they're constructing the budget. A multi-year budget will be developed upon conclusion of union negotiations.

Standard II - Management and Operations

SP Objective 2: Develop an NPS budget and budget process that meets the needs of our students and district goals.

IIE Fiscal Systems

1. Development of the FY26 & FY27 budget
2. Comparison of regional salaries to remain competitive for all service areas
3. Implement multi-year budgeting

IIA Environment

1. District facility plan that addresses:
 - a. Net zero carbon emissions
 - b. Updated and updatable connective technology
 - c. Classrooms adaptable to varying pedagogies
 - d. Updated bathrooms

Benchmark Evidence: District facility plan

Standard III - Family and Community Engagement

SP Objective 5: Strengthen the sense of connection and belonging experienced by students, staff, and caregivers.

IIIA Engagement

1. As a community of learners, NPS is committed to equity and the success of each student. It is important that all of our students have a sense of belonging, inclusivity, access, and connectedness.

Benchmark Evidence: Provide professional development to staff that promotes awareness and techniques for intervention on racial, ethnic, religious, gender and sexual identity and helping staff/administrators to diffuse identity-related conflicts instead of ignoring or dismissing the situation. (Addressing the “isms”)

2. Sharing the strategic plan with the community

Benchmark Evidence: “Taking the SP on the Road” by planning morning and early evening sessions at the six schools providing an opportunity for caregivers, students and staff to learn about the plan and ask questions. Provide an opportunity to share with community members as well.

Climate survey (Students)

Benchmark Evidence: engaging representatives from stakeholder groups in the work of the strategic plan.

3. Ongoing partnerships with community groups: NEF, VINS, Kiwanis and Northampton Neighbors. Ongoing partnerships with the five college consortium partners, YMCA, private schools and the Chamber. Continue collaboration with city departments.

Benchmark Evidence: active participation in meetings, and events. Working with CAPA Director, DPW, Parks & Recreation and Planning to conduct demographic and enrollment studies, net zero carbon emissions targets, organic fields and wraparound programs for families.

Last week, a presentation was made to families about the new curriculum. It was lightly attended. There is now a literacy page on the new website. This year, we have a K-8 reading challenge.

Standard III - Family and Community Engagement

SP Objective 5: Strengthen the sense of connection and belonging experienced by students, staff, and caregivers.

IIIC Communication

“To effectively communicate, we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others” Tony Robbins

1. Improve the clarity and nuance of responses to emails by acknowledging the concern
2. Communicate with less aggression, judgment and defensiveness and yet be genuine to self.
3. Minimize misunderstandings and be clear and transparent in communication
4. Continue to set clear expectations and guidelines for staff/administrators
5. Improve my interpersonal communication skills with one-to-one personal interactions
6. Cultivate empathy in my communication to build stronger relationships

Benchmark Evidence: sample email responses, communications, ParentSquare & newsletters

Standard IV Professional Culture

SP Objective 4: Improve ELA and math outcomes for English learners, students with disabilities, low-income students, and students identifying as Hispanic or Latino.

SP Objective 5: Strengthen the sense of connection and belonging experienced by students, staff, and caregivers.

IVA Commitment to High Standards

1. Work with administrators and directors to ensure that curriculum is being implemented and that staff are being inclusive, equitable and flexible in their instructional practices.
2. Using data to inform instruction
3. Empower administrators, staff to lead meetings and work groups fostering a collaborative approach

Benchmark Evidence: classroom observation notes, sample notes from grade level meetings, action plans from work groups (SP), Data teams sample notes, sample agendas from ALT and Principal/Director meetings.

Standard IV Professional Culture

SP Objective 4: Improve ELA and math outcomes for English learners, students with disabilities, low-income students, and students identifying as Hispanic or Latino.

SP Objective 5: Strengthen the sense of connection and belonging experienced by students, staff, and caregivers.

IVC Communication

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2. Communicate with less aggression, judgment and defensiveness and yet be genuine to self.

3. Minimize misunderstandings and be clear and transparent in communication
4. Continue to set clear expectations and guidelines for staff/administrators
5. Improve my interpersonal communication skills with one-to-one personal interactions
6. Cultivate empathy in my communication to build stronger relationships
7. Actively engage stakeholder groups in the decision-making process

Benchmark Evidence: Continue engaging stakeholder groups during interview process, working towards strategic planning objectives and ancillary sample email responses, agendas to ALT and Principal/Directors meetings, communications samples from constituent groups & newsletters.

Dr. Bonner described some of her recent parent communications. Staff are receiving education about protocols surrounding immigration status.

Member Agna reported having received communication from NASE regarding a comment made by Dr. Bonner at the Ryan Road road show implying that “paraeducators sit around and do nothing.” She asked Dr. Bonner to respond. Dr. Bonner said that this comment, reported by an individual not in attendance, was taken out of context. She said the context was the efficiency of how we use our staff. Subcommittee members raised the possibility of engaging in a restorative justice circle. Dr. Bonner said that, in this practice, all parties must be willing to participate. Dr. Bonner agreed to participate in a listening session in which she would not speak. Member Agna then raised the issue of Dr. Bonner’s performance at the high school strategic plan roadshow at which she was able to talk to people and bring the temperature down. She said the public is looking for an advocate for additional school funding. She supported a restorative justice circle to see if there’s any possibility of understanding each other better.

Member Agna then raised the issue of the tone used in the recent communication about absenteeism. Dr. Bonner responded that absenteeism is a serious issue affecting the culture and morale of the district. She said that when she speaks the truth, that truth is manipulated by people who want to use it for their own gain.

There was discussion about the public nature of superintendent evaluation.

5. Next Meeting - June 2, 2025, 5:15 pm

6. Adjourn - Member Hennessey made a motion, seconded by Member Miller, to adjourn. The roll call vote follows.

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| Gwen Agna, Chair | Aye |
| Anne Hennessey | Aye |
| Margaret Miller | Aye |
| QUORUM | Aye 3 |

The meeting adjourned at 6:01 pm.