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This update covers the 9/21/2020 Newton School Committee meeting. If you are interested in watching NewTV's recording of this meeting, you can link directly to the meeting via [www.newtv.org](http://www.newtv.org).

Before we begin, we'd like to say an enormous thank you to the principals, teachers, administrators and incredibly hard-working custodians and transportation, facilities and Health and Human Services teams, who have made a Herculean effort to get our elementary schools open last week. Roughly a quarter of elementary students in grades K-2 started in-person hybrid school last Monday. Grades 3-5 begin in-person hybrid on 9/29/2020. For many families, it's very exciting and wonderful to see the buildings open. Please join us in thanking the many, many people who helped to make that possible.

Next, we applaud the district for partnering with the City of Newton Public Buildings Department to conduct an independent, comprehensive review and analysis of all ventilation systems throughout the district, detailed in full below.

### **Superintendent's Update:**

- Today (9/21/2020) was the first day of in person school for elementary schools and day four for secondary students who have very full schedules both at the middle and high schools in their distance-learning.
- Newton opened 15 elementary schools in-person today plus our preschool has been open for a few days. We've opened more schools than any district in the state has thus far. It is such a team effort, working nights and weekends. I think about the Health and Human Services work and all the health protocols, the technology work that has been incredible, the facilities work around the clock, teaching and learning updating curriculums, and transportation logistics. I was at two buildings today, Underwood and Cabot, and both went really well.
- I do want to talk a little bit more about facilities and acknowledge a challenge we faced at the end of last week with ventilation. In some testing late last week, it was found that unit ventilators in a few rooms didn't meet the standard we were looking for. These were in our oldest buildings and so I want to acknowledge that those units were fixed this

- We probably should've tested earlier and I want to acknowledge that and take responsibility for that. Our goal is to maximize airflow and air exchange and now we have opportunities to do that with some of the work that our facilities team will talk about later tonight. It's really important that we do it now because it is essential that this work take place given our goal to get all students in school. If we're going to get all the students in school in full capacity, it's really important that all of our systems are a go particularly when it comes to airflow.

### Discussions/Update:

- [Facilities Ventilation Update:](#)
  - Ventilation Guiding Principles--Maximize fresh air intake, minimize air recirculation, increase & sustain air filter efficiency.
  - Recent Spot Checks:
    - Third-party air balancing firm conducted spot checks in 12 spaces in four buildings on 9/18/20 - Lincoln -Eliot, Franklin, Ward, NECP.
    - Contractor identified unit ventilators in four rooms that were underperforming.
    - Immediate action taken to resolve issues identified.
  - New Ventilation Plan – Objective:
    - Given critical nature of ventilation systems operating at full capacity, NPS, in partnership with City of Newton Public Buildings Department, will deploy a multi-pronged strategy to inspect, modify, and improve ventilation systems in all school buildings. The strategy will utilize third-party contractors to inspect, repair, and test systems so that measured results meet or exceed design capacity.
  - Strategy and Action Plan—Multi-pronged strategy involves three key professional contractors, in addition to district facilities team and the full Public Buildings project management team, to assist in achieving objectives:
    - Mechanical engineering firm.
    - HVAC contractor(s), in addition to our current Boston Mechanical HVAC vendor.
    - Air testing and balancing firm(s).

- Calculation of air flow and air exchange requirements for each occupied space based on design occupancy levels.
- Technical assistance and direction as needed to HVAC contractors onsite.
- Management, direction, and technical assistance for air flow testing and balancing firm.
- Review and approval of contractor submittals as appropriate and in a timely manner.
- Production of a final report for each school with the following sections:
  - Existing conditions report with a space inventory and specific equipment specifications and air flow information for each occupied space.
  - Short-term (1-month) and long-term (>1month) maintenance, repair, and capital investment recommendations.
  - Biweekly reports on status of project initiative.
- HVAC – Scope of Work: Will include service and repair of ventilation systems. Specific work will depend upon diagnosis of issue and could include (but is not limited to):
  - Replace motors, clean unit coils, replace belts, lubricate bearings, adjust dampers and associated controls, remove any blockages and seal any unwanted penetrations or openings within the unit ventilator.
  - Any additional work required to achieve proper ventilation.
- Air Test Balancing Firm – Scope of Work:
  - The air testing and balancing firms begin testing on equipment in all newer schools. Reports and findings will drive maintenance and repair strategy for those schools.
  - The air testing and balancing will follow remedial work to ensure that work has been successful in increasing capacity.
  - Air testing and balancing firms will provide initial, interim, and final reports that will be made public as they are submitted.
- Action Steps Already Taken:
  - Began compilation of stock lists, product information, and procurement of parts and components needed for unit ventilators.

- Contacted six additional air testing and balancing firms.
- Contacted more than fifty HVAC service and repair contractors throughout the northeast region.
- Requested emergency waivers from DCAM to initiate the HVAC work allowing us to proceed as quickly as possible, which has now been granted.
- Timeline:
  - GOAL: To complete as much work as possible before inclement weather necessitates fewer natural ventilation systems, such as open windows and doors.
  - Project schedules will be developed this week as various HVAC contractors are onboarded and will be communicated out as they become available.
- Ventilation Communications:
  - All engineering and balancing reports will be published on the NPS website.
  - Regular progress reports, testing results, and budgetary considerations provided to School Committee.
  - Regular communication to families and staff as we move through testing, modification, and improvement.
- [Final FY20 Fiscal/Ops Update](#) (with FY21 snapshot):
  - The final balance of the FY20 Newton Public Schools budget is \$113. Along with this balance is a circuit breaker carry forward to FY21 of \$4,386,190, an increase of approximately \$1.1 million from the carry forward balance projected in the June fiscal report of \$3,380,000, which included both available balance and budget reserve funds. FY20 has been an unprecedented fiscal year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and a needed last-minute FY21 budget reduction from the City of \$1.5 million has left the district with an unusually high amount of carry forward funds needed to balance the upcoming FY21 budget - \$3.15 million dollars of this carry forward is planned and needed to balance the FY21 budget.
    - Grants: FY20 grants provided \$8,225,186 of funding to the district. FY21 grants revenue is projected at \$10,942,522, an increase of \$2,717,336 over FY20. Grants continue to support key initiatives and pilot programs that further the district's

statistics. While total Title I funding is decreasing in FY21, Title I programming will expand due to more schools meeting the qualifications.

- Includes the addition of services at a fifth elementary school for FY21 (Targeted Assistance Schools: Lincoln Eliot, Zervas, Countryside, Burr, and Underwood).
  - Title I funds are used to fund literacy specialists, after school and summer programs, family engagement, and professional development at targeted assistance schools.
  - \$3,729,336 in grant funding is expected in FY21 to assist in covering expenses directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 related grant funding is expected to be used to offset costs of technology, transportation, food services, facility projects and supplies.
- FY21 Preliminary Update:
    - Many uncertainties in the fiscal outlook due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the many changes in staffing needs due to the school reopening plans.
    - District anticipates approximately \$3.7 million in federal and state grant funding designated for COVID-19 related expenses in FY21.
    - District begins the school year with approximately 125 unfilled support positions (aides). Savings from these positions will allow flexibility to increase other positions: need to hire up to 70 elementary support positions (aides), approximately 30 Instructional Support Specialists (ISS) at the middle schools, and up to 15 professional staff, primarily in Student Services.
  - Key areas of fiscal uncertainty for the FY21 fiscal year include revolving accounts, Circuit Breaker funding, and costs related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Revolving account revenue, including fee revenue, was significantly reduced in FY20 due to school closures, and is expected to be reduced in FY21.
  - State Circuit Breaker funding is a major area of uncertainty. The State has not yet released information regarding the details of new Circuit Breaker funding, developed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic for special education

year will be presented to School Committee on Monday November 16, 2020.

### Consent Agenda

- Voted to approve the [METCO Bus Monitor Pay Scale Increase](#), 9-0-0.
- Voted to approve Emily Prenner as [MASC Conference Delegate](#) and Tamika Olszewski as MASC Conference Alternate, 9-0-0.
- Voted to approve [6/8/20](#) & [6/22/20](#) Minutes, 9-0-0.

### Next Meeting

The School Committee will hold another VIRTUAL School Committee meeting **on Monday, October 5th, 6:30-8:30 PM**. On the agenda will be a presentation on the Systemwide Goals, the Superintendent Goals, an update on the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) and an update on the High School in-person learning committee.

### How to Participate in Public Comment

To participate in the public comment portion of a meeting, please submit your NAME and ADDRESS by email with the subject line "Public Comment for [DATE]" to [schoolcommittee@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:schoolcommittee@newton.k12.ma.us) PRIOR to 7:00 pm, the official start time of the meeting. You will need to join the Virtual Meeting by computer or phone to participate. During the Public Comment portion of the meeting, the School Committee Chairperson will call your name. At that time, unmute your microphone and turn on video to provide public comment. You are limited to 3 minutes.

We hope you found this summary useful. You can access all School Committee meeting documents via the NPS website ([www.newton.k12.ma.us/schoolcommittee](http://www.newton.k12.ma.us/schoolcommittee)). Additionally, if you are interested in watching an SC meeting from home or a recorded meeting, you can obtain access via [www.newtv.org](http://www.newtv.org). On the district [Facebook](#) page, you can find videos of past "Virtual Office Hours," which are held once a month and provide the community with the opportunity to ask questions through the FB Live format.

As always, we are very happy to answer any questions or discuss any concerns you may have. Feel free to contact us via email at

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Sincerely,  
The Newton School Committee



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