

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS  
Minutes of Newton Falls Exempted Village Schools Special Meeting  
June 6, 2013 at 5:00 pm. – Jr./Sr. High School Board Room

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President, Mr. Don Baker, called the regular meeting of the Newton Falls Board of Education to order at 5:04 p.m.

**FLAG SALUTE**

**ROLL CALL:** Mr. Baker, Mr. Ballas, Mrs. Davis, and Mr. Rapczak were in attendance. Mrs. Koontz arrived at 6:00 p.m.

**Discussion of Handbooks**

Mr. Woodard

We need to be decisive this evening regarding the handbooks. We need to approve them at our June 20, 2013 meeting in order to get them to the printer in time for school. There are three issues with the handbooks as follows:

**Schools Fees:** I recommend that we include a general statement such as that in the high school handbook to include school fees should we need them, but the amount is not specified.

**Grade Scale:** We are debating changing the grade scale from the current scale (93-100=A) to a 10 point based scale (90-100=A). We changed it in the high school handbook, but not in the other handbooks.

**Attendance:** We need to review our attendance policy. They are debating the ADM count in the Ohio General Assembly. They are considering two times per year or once a month. The rumor is it will be once a month. Poor attendance could hurt our funding. We are considering that if a student misses five days, we send a letter and require a medical excuse. We need to follow truancy rules.

School Fees Discussion

Everyone agreed with Mr. Woodard's recommendation to have the school fee language as written in the high school handbook which leaves open the possibility of school fees but doesn't state specific amounts.

Grading Scale Discussion

Mr. Crowder stated that colleges are using the 90-100 grade scale. When students are competing for scholarships, it's not a level playing field. We originally changed to the 93-100 scale for academic rigor. Academic rigor comes from the teacher, not the grading scale. Mr. Baker asked if we could differentiate college classes versus other classes, and if the percentage is on record. Mr. Crowder responded that our honors diplomas are ranked higher than others as stated in our Board policy, and that the percentage is on the high school transcript.

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---

Mr. Purnell stated that the elementary is looking at a standards based report card. We have to define the "O" as a percentage. Currently, "O" is 93-100. Mr. Thomas stated that Mr. Wilson implemented the 93-100 scale during Mr. Thomas's first year because teachers were using different scales. The 93-100 was used most frequently, so they switched to that scale.

Mr. Woodard conducted a survey among area districts. Ten districts are using our current scale. Three are using a 10 point scale, but with pluses and minuses, and three are using the 90-100 scale.

Mr. Thomas surveyed his teachers. Nine wanted no change, and seven wanted to change. The high school, junior high school, and elementary overwhelmingly wanted to change to the 90-100 scale.

Mr. Crowder would like to change to the 90-100 scale or the 90-100 with pluses and minuses.

Mr. Rapczak feels we shouldn't give letter grades for the elementary at all, and asked Mr. Purnell his opinion. Mr. Purnell would like to use the O-S-I scale with shadings for mastery of objectives, but that is a hard sell to the public. They like the A-B-C scale.

The administrators support converting to the 90-100 scale. Mr. Rapczak supports 90-100 system, but would be okay with the plus/minus system as well. He especially likes the plus/minus option.

The administrators feel the plus/minus scale or the 90-100 scale helps the special education students. Mr. Crowder also thinks the plus/minus scale would help students who have teachers who will not round their grades.

Mrs. Davis favors the 93-100 scale and would like Mrs. Koontz to be present to make the decision. Mr. Baker would like more time for reflection before changing the grade scale, possibly delaying it until the next school year.

The overall consensus among the administrators was that a new grade scale would not affect the online students, but would allow more kids the opportunity to become valedictorian or salutatorian, and would also help kids on the low end and bring more kids into play on the high end.

Mrs. Koontz arrived at 6:00 p.m. after the meeting progressed to reviewing each handbook. Once she arrived, the other board members and the administrators brought her up to speed on the discussions that took place in her absence, with the main focus being the debate about the grade scale. Mrs. Koontz asked the benefit of the plus/minus system. The answer was that it's an intrinsic motivator for parents and students. Mrs. Koontz asked the administrators their opinion, and they were all in favor of the plus/minus system.

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Mr. Ballas, Mr. Rapczak, Mr. Baker, and Mrs. Koontz were all in favor of the plus/minus system. Mrs. Davis wanted more time to reflect on the decision, and preferred our current grading system, but stated that she could live with the plus/minus system. It was decided to use the 10 point grade scale with the plus/minus system.

Attendance Discussion

There were no issues with tightening up the attendance policy. Mr. Baker suggested that uniformity should be the priority.

The Board reviewed each handbook page by page, making minor changes along the way.

Elementary Handbook

The Board discussed the language on page one relating to the use of the term “adult” for signing kids in and out. Some sections specify that the person can be 16 years of age or older so that older siblings can assume that responsibility. The Board decided to leave the language unchanged.

The Board also discussed the section on page one relating to parents’ abilities to take their children out of the bus line or off the bus. The section specifies that the parent must notify someone in the office. Mr. Woodard explained that parents can always take their children in an emergency. The language remained unchanged.

On page three, the Board discussed the need for parents to send daily excuses for their children to refrain from physical activity. Mr. Baker felt that a daily note was excessive. Mr. Woodard agreed that blanket excuses for a certain period of time are fine, and it was decided that “daily” would be removed.

Mrs. Koontz began a discussion pertaining to the assault clause and wanting to ensure that students are part of this clause. Mr. Woodard stated that the student aspect is addressed in another section of the handbook. He also stated that every incident of bullying is investigated and he is confident that the District is working hard to improve the bullying situation.

Dress code was discussed relating to shorts during the school day vs. athletic events, hair color, and flip flops. The Board then moved on to discuss the vacation section with no changes being made.

Middle School Handbook

Mrs. Koontz brought up the chain of command that was previously listed in the front of the handbook. Mr. Thomas stated that the issue is now addressed in an introduction letter that is sent to the parents. Mr. Thomas agreed to add Mr. Woodard as one of the steps in the chain of command.

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On page six, the Board discussed “outlandish” hair color and decided the definition of “outlandish” is up to Mr. Thomas’s discretion. Frayed jeans were also discussed, and Mr. Thomas stated that they can be worn as long as no skin is showing.

The Board discussed the use of cell phones during school and while riding the bus. Mrs. Koontz stated that from the parents’ perspective, they may need information from their child after school that may involve them using their cell phone on the bus. Technically, cell phone use on a school bus is against the law. All in attendance agreed that cell phone use during school and transportation is very difficult to regulate, but we must do our best to do so. It was decided that the language would remain the same.

High School/Junior High Handbook

The Board and the Administrators discussed the current graduation requirements and how those requirements will be changing in the future due to changes in the law. Mrs. Koontz asked how we discipline TCTC students who operate their vehicles in a reckless or unsafe manner on school grounds. Mr. Crowder stated that we contact TCTC to deal with discipline through them. Mr. Baker as if we can revoke a parking permit for repeated violations of our parking regulations. Mr. Woodard said that we can do that, but we don’t necessarily have to add it to the handbook. We always have that authority.

Mr. Woodard thanked the Board and the Administrators for the discussion and asked the Administrators to have the handbooks updated by their Tuesday meeting.

**Executive Session**

**#99-2013**

Mr. Rapczak moved and Mrs. Koontz seconded the motion to enter into executive session at 7:10 p.m.

WHEREAS, as a public board of education may hold an executive session only after a majority of the quorum of this board determines by a roll call vote to hold such a session and only at a regular or special meeting for the sole purpose of the consideration of any of the following matters:

A. To consider **one or more, as applicable**, of the check marked items with respect to a public employee or official:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Appointment
2.   X   Employment
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Dismissal
4.   X   Discipline
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Promotion
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Demotion
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Compensation
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Investigation of charges/complaints (unless public hearing requested)

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- B. To consider the purchase of property for the public purposed or for the sale of property at competitive bidding.
  - C. Conferences with an attorney for the public body concerning disputes involving the public body that are the subject of pending or imminent court action.
  - D. **Preparing for, conducting, or reviewing negotiations or bargaining sessions with public employees concerning their compensation or other terms and conditions of their employment.**
  - E. Matters required to be kept confidential by federal law or rules or state statutes.
  - F. Specialized details of security arrangements where disclosure of the matters discussed might reveal information that could be used for the purpose of committing or avoid prosecution for a violation of the law.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Newton Falls Exempted Village Schools District Board of Education, by a majority of the quorum present at this meeting, does hereby declare its intention to hold an executive session on items A2, A4, D as listed above.

**ROLL CALL:** Ayes: Mr. Rapczak, Mrs. Koontz, Mr. Ballas, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Baker  
**MOTION CARRIED**

Mr. Baker declared the Board back in regular session at 8:01 p.m.

**Adjournment**

**#100-2013**

Mr. Ballas moved and Mr. Rapczak seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:** Ayes: Mr. Ballas, Mr. Rapczak, Mrs. Davis, Mrs. Koontz, Mr. Baker  
**MOTION CARRIED**

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Treasurer

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Board President

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