

**CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF NIAGARA FALLS**  
**DISTRICT PARENT COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes**

**Wednesday, November 20, 2024, at 5:30 P.M.**  
**First Floor Conference Room – Administration Building**

**Present:** Makeesha Booker, Dasha Colvin, Andrea Douglas, Tiffany Garcia, Laura Hood, Karen Howard, Stephanie Lee-Martin, Daraleigh Nowak, Charlotte Robinson, Raquel Satarian, Marlo Stearns, Molly Webber, Richard Carella, Stan Wojton and Wendy Tedesco.

**Schools Represented:** Abate, Bloneva Bond, Cataract, GJ Mann, Maple, 79<sup>th</sup> Street, Gaskill Prep, LaSalle Prep, and NFHS

**Schools Missed:** Kalfas and Hyde Park

**Contact Phone Number:** Stan Wojton, Central Office Ph: 286-4189 Email: swojton@nfschools.net

**Procedural Matters**

1. All concerns should be taken to your building principal or School Quality Council before being brought up at the District Parent Committee meeting.
2. The information discussed at the DPC meeting is to be relayed back to your school parent group.
3. At least one representative from each school should attend each meeting. If one representative cannot attend a certain meeting, they should notify their alternate representative.
4. The meeting agendas and minutes can be found at [www.nfschools.net](http://www.nfschools.net) under the “Parent & Guardian” tab, “District Parent Committee” heading.

**Welcome & Introductions**

Mrs. Garcia welcomed everyone to the meeting and then introduced Mr. Wojton, who will give District update.

**District Update**

Mr. Wojton thanked everyone for attending tonight’s meeting. The Walk the World event that took place on November 2 was a huge success. Those who organized and participated in the event did a fantastic job. As mentioned at our last meeting, Jewish Family Services, NAZ716 and Aero Transportation will be sponsoring a turkey giveaway this Thursday from 4 PM – 6 PM at Kalfas, please share this information with others at your school. On Friday, there will be a movie night at Abate sponsored by Men Standing Strong (Charlie Brown Thanksgiving). Mr. Edwards will provide the meal. Please take a minute to stop by Abate to see the wonderful mural on the side of the building and in the courtyard. The artists were paid for through the Niagara Falls Heritage Center/Underground Railroad. Ideas for the mural were put together from the community, staff and students. The wall mural contains mosaics that represent the community. Mrs. Teller, who was a former music teacher at Abate, wrote a song for Abate. Part of the song lyrics are included in the wall mural, as well as a sturgeon to represent Native American culture. Mrs. Colvin’s daughter is the cheerleader depicted in the mural, as her daughter advocated to start a cheer team for the school. There is a legend the artist created that goes along with the mural that explains the context of the mural for anyone that come to see it. One of the mural artists did a workshop during the day with students to create an art project that is displayed in the front entrance inside the school.

Just a reminder that next week, school is in session for students on Monday and Tuesday only. On Wednesday, the buildings will be open, but no students or teachers will be in attendance. As we enter into the holiday

season, please keep in mind that it can be a tough time of the year for some students. The 10-week marking period is coming to a close soon. The first trimester for the early grades will close in about 2 weeks. Here is the link to the NFCSD website for the Report Card Schedules for all grade levels if you would like to refer to it: <https://www.nfschools.net/Page/15220>.

NFHS and Wilson High School hosted a wonderful concert last night to benefit mental health organizations. The musical *Beautiful* that took place at NFHS was amazing. Looking forward to *Frozen* elementary performance and all of the holiday band and choral concerts, as well as *The Nutcracker*.

The District's Safety Committee met today for its monthly meeting. The Safety Committee consists of teacher members, administrators, community members, Mr. DalPorto and a BOCES representative. At the meeting today, the Committee discussed the Sandy Hook Say Something program which provides a way for students to anonymously report any type of serious mental health crisis or dangerous threats they may become aware of. The program is in place at NFHS and both prep schools. Since the program's inception in February of last year, have received 44 tips (20 of them have required police notification). District staff and police are notified very quickly when a tip comes in. Recently, a student at Gaskill used the program to express that she was in a crisis situation, and she received the assistance she needed. Along with having a trusted adult at their schools, this program can help bridge the gap if a student doesn't feel comfortable discussing a problem face to face.

Mrs. Robinson mentioned that the blinking light on Porter Road needs to be fixed so that high school students can safely cross the street. Mr. Wojton will pass this information onto the City.

#### **Bus Tracking App**

Ms. Garcia introduced Mrs. Kasey Dixon, NFCSD Transportation Director, to talk about the new bus app. Mrs. Dixon thanked the DPC members for giving her the opportunity to talk about the new My Ride app from Tyler Technologies. Along with being the Transportation Director, Mrs. Dixon is the mother of four children who attend school in the NFCSD.

Mrs. Dixon provided a flier that contains a QR code that can be used to download the My Ride app. Parents can also access information through the Tyler Technologies website. My Ride provides the estimated arrival time of your child's bus. If the bus is running late for some reason, the app will indicate this information. Each bus has a GPS unit that makes this possible. In order to set up the app, you will need your personal email address, your first and last name, family last name, and student's ID#. You will also need to create a password. Once you have entered the required information into the app, you will get a confirmation email. From that email, you will be able to then log into the app. Parents can add all of their children onto the app so they can view each child's routing information. You control your own user name and password, which makes the app more secure. If you don't know your child's ID#, you can contact your child's school. Parents can send a message to the Transportation Office through the app to ask general questions, inquire about lost items, etc. The app will remind parents about days off also.

Home address changes still have to go through the school and cannot be done through the app. Tyler Technologies is constantly making upgrades based on school district personnel and parent input. Hoping to eventually add basic transportation forms to the app so parents can fill them out on-line. Parents can opt out of transportation services through the app if your child does not need transportation to and from school. If a student will be out of school for a long period of time, the parent can suspend bus service temporarily. However, keep in mind it takes 5 days to reinstate bussing services.

Once a parent has set up their account in the app, they can share their child's information from the app with other family members, their child, etc. However, only one parent can get the initial link for the app. In special cases, another person can receive the link, once everything is verified through the school and the parent. The My Ride app provides only information on your child, not other students who may be on the bus. The app updates fairly quickly.

The school will still contact the parent if there has been a change to the student's bus route. The app will automatically update at the start of each school year. There will be no need to re-install the app. In the future, the District may consider equipping buses with computer tablets that would permit students to scan on and off the bus. Parents would then know through the app if their child boarded the bus, is still on the bus, or exited the bus.

Currently, drivers take attendance on the bus daily so they know what students are on the bus. NFHS is different. Because there are so many students, generic stops are established. If there is not enough room on the bus for all the students at once, another bus will come behind the first bus to pick up any remaining students. Bus drivers call dispatch if another bus is needed. The bus driver will let the remaining students know that there is another bus coming to pick them up.

The My Ride app will be launched on December 9. The app link will be sent out to NFHS and prep school parents through Teams. Elementary schools will send paper copy of instructions home with bussing students. Information will also be posted on the NFCS website. Mrs. Robinson suggested that Mr. Laurie do an autodial call to alert parents ahead of sending out in Teams so that students don't get to the link before the parent does.

Mrs. Dixon noted that there will not be any bussing letters going out for the 2025-26 school year in September. The My Ride app will take the place of the bussing letter and will contain the student's transportation information. Mrs. Dixon encourages students to still get to the bus stop 10 minutes before their scheduled pick-up time.

If anyone has any questions regarding the new My Ride app, please feel free to contact the Transportation Office.

#### **AOBs**

There will not be a District Parent Committee meeting in December due to the winter break. Mr. Wojton noted that at the January meeting, a presentation will be made regarding the new Blue-Ribbon Pathways for NFHS. At the February meeting, representatives from Say Yes Niagara Falls will make a presentation. Mr. Wojton expressed that he is grateful and thankful for the members of the DPC and wished everyone a happy holiday season to spend time with family and recharge.

***\*No December Meeting\****

***Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 in First Floor Conference Room***