

**Nantucket Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 18, 2025**

Present Members: Chair Timothy Lepore, Vice-Chair Laura Gallagher Byrne, Esmerelda Martinez, Vincent Murphy, and Student Council Representative Nora Sullivan

The March 18, 2025, School Committee meeting was called to order at 6:03 PM in the Nantucket High School LGI by Chair Timothy Lepore. A motion was made by Laura Gallagher Byrne, seconded by Vincent Murphy. The agenda was approved unanimously.

There was no public comment.

Superintendent's Update

Superintendent Hallett appreciated the opportunity to attend the AASA Annual Superintendent Conference from March 5th to 7th in New Orleans, which focused on future-driven leadership. Key topics included AI, school safety, emerging technologies, data-driven decision-making, and collaboration among students, teachers, families, and the community. A keynote address emphasized the need to move beyond the traditional one-teacher, one-classroom model in favor of more flexible approaches like co-teaching and cohort-based instruction. Additional sessions covered transportation solutions, blended classrooms, strategic data use, distributive teaching, social media and cell phone policies, and AI regulations. Superintendent Hallett found the conference highly informative and valuable.

In her transportation update, Superintendent Hallett shared that she has begun meeting monthly with Dr. Hope Hanscom, the new Executive Director of the Cape Cod Collaborative, to address ongoing transportation challenges. The primary issue remains a shortage of bus drivers, affecting over 430 students who rely on bus transportation, with 23 currently on a waiting list. Efforts to mitigate the issue include reminding families of students in grades 6-12 to utilize designated early and late bus runs and implementing attendance monitoring on all three large buses. A 7D van is expected to become available within a month, which requires a less complex licensing process. The Cape Cod Collaborative is actively recruiting drivers through local advertisements and is training one additional large bus driver, though completion before the end of the school year is uncertain. Superintendent Hallett encouraged community members, including school staff, to consider bus driving as a primary or supplemental job and highlighted the opportunity for flexible scheduling. She invited anyone interested in obtaining a 7D license, which can be completed in a day with specific requirements, to reach out for more information.

Dr. Hallett introduced Dr. Hope Hanscom through Google Meet as her boat was cancelled earlier that day. Dr. Hanscom reported that the Cape Cod Collaborative is opening its Articles of Agreement for the first time since 2015 to allow Plymouth Public Schools to join as a member. As a result, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) reviewed the agreement, requiring a minor adjustment to align with updated regulations. The only necessary change was the removal of adjunct membership, as it is no longer recognized for collaboratives. The proposal includes these two updates, and Dr. Hanscom welcomed any questions. The committee had no questions.

Superintendent Hallett was excited to announce the Nantucket Golf Club's 10 names for traditional scholars and 10 names for professional scholars.

Presentations and discussions of issues to the Committee

Nantucket Public Schools Safety & Security Needs Assessment - Melissa Devitt, Curriculum Director

Mrs. Devitt reported on the district's ongoing safety assessment, which began in the summer with administrators and continued through the fall. A comprehensive report has been provided and will be reviewed by legal counsel. The assessment focused on ensuring a safe learning environment by emphasizing prevention rather than just crisis response. Key areas examined included character development, cyberbullying, mental health, anonymous reporting systems, personnel training, and school security. The district follows state and federal safety guidelines and utilizes resources such as the Raptor system for visitor management and emergency alerts. The assessment,

conducted by retired Secret Service agent Thomas Catalano, included multiple site visits and evaluations of security measures. Findings highlighted strengths such as a competent School Resource Officer (SRO), the presence of security cameras, and a comprehensive safety plan. However, areas for improvement were identified, including the need for a clear safety governance structure, better utilization of Raptor's features, and more structured communication about safety protocols. Recommendations included conducting a joint tabletop exercise with local emergency agencies, increasing law enforcement presence during NES and NIS arrival and dismissal times, and improving signage in parking areas. Other concerns addressed included inadequate lighting near CPS, difficulties with hearing announcements in school buildings, and the need for an additional SRO. The assessment also identified inconsistencies in staff signing in when moving between buildings, students being picked up without following Raptor protocols, and doors being propped open, allowing unauthorized access.

Building-specific concerns were noted, such as NES being a multi-use facility with significant foot traffic, the need for more supervision during transitions at CPS and NHS, and safety risks at the Boys and Girls Club dismissal area. Next steps include creating an action plan, increasing Raptor training, and implementing building-based safety teams to address these issues.

Mr. Murphy inquired about the available features of the Raptor system and which ones the district is currently utilizing. He also noted that the town has a lighting ordinance. Mrs. Devitt explained that while staff badges could be scanned into Raptor, they are currently processed through a different system. She also mentioned the possibility of implementing electronic hall passes.

Mrs. Gallagher-Byrne asked if there would be a reassessment. Mrs. Devitt replied Yes.

Dr. Lepore acknowledged concerns about the lighting issue. He inquired about funding for the additional SRO.

Dr. Hallett confirmed that the police department would cover the cost.

2025 Winter Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Data, Grades K-8 - Dr. Mandy Bardsley & Melissa Devitt, Curriculum Directors

Dr. Mandy Bardsley, the Director of Curriculum for STEM, and Melissa Devitt presented the winter MAP data, focusing on reading and math. They reviewed quadrant reports, examined demographic trends, and discussed next steps, with principals explaining how the district is responding to the data. The presentation highlighted the instructional vision focused on student growth and achievement. It also outlined MAP's role in the assessment system, alongside MCAS for state verification and classroom-level assessments. The discussion covered district trends and key terms, including growth percentile, achievement percentile, norm, and median. Achievement is a snapshot in time, while growth measures progress between assessments, such as from fall to winter.

Mrs. Devitt began the presentation with an overview of reading data. The first graph focused on NES, showing that kindergarten, first, and second grade were below the desired quadrant. Kindergarten had a growth percentile of 49 and an achievement percentile of 50. First grade showed 35th percentile growth and 43rd percentile achievement, while second grade had 26th percentile growth and 33rd percentile achievement.

At NIS, fourth grade showed improvement in growth, and fifth grade was slightly above the line for achievement. Specifically, third grade had 33rd percentile growth and 43rd percentile achievement, fourth grade showed 41st percentile growth and 54th percentile achievement, and fifth grade had 53rd percentile growth and 48th percentile achievement, indicating progress. At CPS, seventh grade demonstrated both higher achievement and growth, while sixth grade was also improving. The detailed breakdown showed sixth grade at the 52nd percentile for growth and 48th percentile for achievement, seventh grade at 55th percentile for growth and 56th percentile for achievement, and eighth grade was not tested.

Dr. Bardsley explained that math data has been tracked over several years, with graphs showing data from Winter 2023, 2024, and 2025. The math needs assessment took place in 2021-2022, followed by a curriculum review in 2022-2023, with the new curriculum starting in 2023-2024. At NES, there is an upward trend in math achievement, with kindergarten showing consistent improvement, first grade having overall growth but a slight dip, and second grade showing some decline compared to last year. Dr. Bardsley stressed the importance of growth, aiming for the 61st percentile, as growth leads to achievement. NES is currently at the 46th percentile for growth. She also explained the differences between MAP and MCAS scoring, noting that achievement requires scoring in the top 50% of the blue range to exceed expectations.

Mrs. Gallagher-Byrne asked about the curriculum change, and Dr. Bardsley confirmed it happened in the 2023-2024 school year. Dr. Bardsley then highlighted the goal of reaching the 61st percentile for growth, with current growth percentages being 39 for kindergarten, 59 for first grade, and 26 for second grade. At NIS, third-grade growth has increased from 2023 to 2025, though slightly down from last year. Growth in fourth grade decreased, while achievement improved, and fifth grade showed an increase in growth. Across three years, results are comparable but not as strong in some areas. Dr. Bardsley mentioned the ideal growth bubble should be green, with the school at the 64th percentile for growth. For individual grades, third grade is at 71%, fourth at 41%, and

fifth at 81%. She noted that as growth increases, achievement shifts rightward. Regarding the fourth grade's dip, she emphasized the importance of tracking trends. She also explained that CPS took a different approach with curriculum adjustments, introducing a new version in 2024. Overall, the school's growth is at the 59th percentile, with sixth grade at 57%, seventh at 53%, and eighth at 70%. Dr. Bardsley also discussed the revamped math intervention model.

The presentation concluded with Dr. Bardsley and Mrs. Devitt reviewing the demographics and special populations graph. Then invited each Principal to discuss.

Mrs. Kubisch, Nantucket Elementary School Principal, outlined current initiatives and concerns. A pre-K steering committee is planning for 2026 expansion, though daycare for ages 0–3 remains limited. A mandated SY26 schedule will include 90 minutes daily for ELA and math. Essential Learning Outcomes and PLCs align with state standards, with teachers calibrating assessments and providing targeted support, including pre-K staff assisting older students. Concerns were raised about MAP results, which staff believe underrepresent student ability. Adjustments include small-group test administration and teacher meetings to better target instruction. Chronic absenteeism was highlighted as a major issue—41% of NES students have missed 10+ days this year. Mrs. Kubisch stressed the impact on foundational learning and requires family meetings for extended absences. She explained that students don't truly catch up with packets or devices and require reteaching, which delays overall progress and burdens teachers. The long-standing flat data trends raise concern, prompting her to suggest broader community engagement and possible solutions like summer recovery school, formal homeschool plans for extended absences, and clear grade-level performance expectations. She called for increased parent communication and support to address this widespread issue.

Mrs. Gallagher Byrne asked how we can implement chronic absenteeism.

Dr. Hallett, through the Chair, acknowledged that chronic absenteeism has been a longstanding issue in the district and emphasized the need to bring it to the forefront. While current discussions are timely given recent data, she recommended tabling the topic for a dedicated future presentation. Mrs. Kubisch suggested forming a work group to begin developing a thoughtful, culturally respectful approach.

Dr. Lepore asked if the other school numbers show the same data.

Dr. Bardsley explained that the highest absenteeism is at the Elementary and High School.

Ms. Janda, Principal at NIS, acknowledged concerns about absenteeism, noting its impact on academic performance and its inclusion in state accountability metrics. She highlighted the importance of focusing on what schools can control, such as using MAP data to inform instruction. Ms. Janda emphasized personalized learning and suggested supports like online tutoring and team teaching for returning students. She shared that math growth was stronger than literacy, likely due to increased professional development and resources. NIS has implemented differentiated PD, a building-based math team, and the use of tools like Delta Math and Reveal's personalized pathways to target individual student needs. She concluded by noting that while current literacy resources are strong, they are being reassessed through curriculum pilots to better meet present student needs.

Mrs. Gallagher Byrne asked if they were going to try multiple curricula.

Ms. Janda explained that the school is currently in a literacy review process following a needs assessment conducted last year by Ms. Devitt based on identified gaps. A team is now exploring curricula that meet those needs. The group is piloting two programs for six weeks each across multiple grade levels, including third through fifth grade. Both veteran and newer teachers are participating to assess how the programs function in real classroom settings. Ms. Janda added that implementing a typing program for students is expected to have a positive impact, particularly on MCAS performance, where students are required to type constructed responses. Without sufficient typing practice, student performance can be hindered. While MAP assessments don't reflect this need due to their multiple-choice format, the importance is evident when aligning with standards and preparing for state testing.

Mr. Horton, Principal of CPS, shared a generally positive outlook on the school's MAP data, attributing much of the success to strong support from staff, district resources, and focused coaching in math and literacy. He thanked Mandy and Melissa for their efforts in data analysis and implementation, and acknowledged the benefit of having MAP data multiple times a year, as opposed to the limited feedback cycle of MCAS. He noted the absence of grade 8 ELA MAP data was due to the decision to reduce testing in light of the already heavy MCAS load, which takes away significant instructional time. Despite this, he expressed interest in revisiting the decision and potentially reinstating the test.

Mr. Horton emphasized that while growth is important, the district must also focus on achievement. He illustrated this with examples of students who show significant growth but remain below proficiency, and others who achieve at a high level but demonstrate less growth. He explained the distinction between Hispanic students and ELs, noting that Hispanic students not classified as ELs tend to have been in the system longer and require

different support strategies. He highlighted the challenge of translating MAP success to MCAS results, emphasizing the importance of student motivation. Mr. Horton expressed concern over students' attitudes toward MCAS, describing a lack of ownership or personal investment in the outcomes. To address this, he suggested introducing friendly academic competition, such as challenging other schools, to foster pride and engagement. He concluded by underscoring the need to find ways to motivate students to take standardized assessments more seriously.

Committee discussions and votes to be taken

Vote to approve the Cape Cod Collaborative amended articles of agreement, Laura Gallagher Byrne made a motion to approve, seconded by Vincent Murphy, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved unanimously

Vote to approve the transfer of \$450,000.00 from the Special Education Stabilization fund to Special Education Tuition, Laura Gallagher Byrne made a motion to approve, seconded by Vincent Murphy, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved unanimously

Vote to approve the donation from the Nantucket Golf Club Foundation to The Nantucket Community School, ACKVenture camp and Early Childhood playgroups for \$30,000.00, Laura Gallagher Byrne made a motion to approve, seconded by Vincent Murphy, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved unanimously

Vote to approve the donation of children's books with an estimated value of \$500.00 from the Nantucket Book Foundation to the Nantucket Community School, Laura Gallagher Byrne made a motion to approve, seconded by Vincent Murphy, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved unanimously

Vote to approve the donation of quantity 150, "Your Guide to Childbirth" books in English and Spanish from Human Services to the Nantucket Community School, Laura Gallagher Byrne made a motion to approve, seconded by Vincent Murphy, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved unanimously

Updates to Policy ID, School Day, Laura Gallagher Byrne made a motion to approve, seconded by Vincent Murphy, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved unanimously

Vote to remove policy IE, Organization of Instruction, per MASC recommendation, Laura Gallagher Byrne made a motion to approve, seconded by Vincent Murphy, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved unanimously

Vote to combine policies IGA, Curriculum Development and IDG, and Curriculum Adoption to policy IGA/IGD Curriculum Development and Adoption, Laura Gallagher Byrne made a motion to approve, seconded by Vincent Murphy, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved unanimously

Updates to policy IGB, Support Services, Laura Gallagher Byrne made a motion to approve, seconded by Vincent Murphy, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved unanimously

Updates to policy IHAM, Health Education, Laura Gallagher Byrne made a motion to approve, seconded by Vincent Murphy, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved unanimously

Updates to policy IHBH, Alternative School Programs, Laura Gallagher Byrne made a motion to approve, seconded by Vincent Murphy, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved unanimously

Updates to IHCA, Summer Schools, Laura Gallagher Byrne made a motion to approve, seconded by Vincent Murphy, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved unanimously

Updates to IJ, Instructional Materials, Laura Gallagher Byrne made a motion to approve, seconded by Vincent Murphy, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved unanimously

Vote to approve Transfers & Invoices, Laura Gallagher Byrne made a motion to approve, seconded by Vincent Murphy, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved unanimously

Student Council Representative - Nora Sullivan

Nora Sullivan, the Student Council representative, provided an update on recent and upcoming school events. Spring sports have officially begun, though teams had to adjust to rainy weather by holding indoor practices or team meetings. The athletic department hosted its Winter Sports Awards Night in the auditorium. Over the weekend, the high school successfully staged four performances of *The Little Mermaid*, directed by chorus and drama teacher Mrs. MacIver, with strong community support. Looking ahead, on Monday, March 24th, the Tri-M Music Honor Society will perform for seniors at the Saltmarsh Center. This morning, a small group from the

National Honor Society visited Small Friends, where they created crafts and cards in honor of Red Cross Month and discussed the role of First Responders in the community. Additionally, from March 14th to March 23rd, an art exhibition featuring work from semester one art students is being held at the Artists Association's Big Gallery at 12 Straight Wharf, open daily from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Sub-Committee/Work Group Report

Agenda for the next meeting, April 1, 2025 - Student Enrollment, End of the Year Audit, Food Services Update, Wellness Committee Update, Drop Out Rate, School Committee Self-Evaluation Report

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 8:11 PM by *Laura Gallagher Byrne*, seconded by Vince Murphy, and with none opposed, the motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Katie Bedell
School Committee Clerk