

Nantucket School Committee
Meeting Minutes
June 5, 2018

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2 Present Members: Jennifer Iller, Tim Lepore, Pauline Proch & Steve Sortevik
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4 The meeting was called to order by Chair, Tim Lepore, at 6:00 PM in the Large Group Instruction room at NHS.
5 A motion was made to approve the agenda, by Steve Sortevik, seconded by Jennifer Iller and was approved by the
6 Committee.
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8 **Comments from Public**

9 The Chairman opened the floor for public comment. PreK teacher, Kim Albertson, wanted to address the School
10 Committee to say thank you to them for their focus and commitment to early intervention. She appreciated their
11 visits over the last few months to the PreSchool classrooms and wanted to reinforce how important the early years
12 screenings are in helping to facilitate IEP placements and needs in classrooms. She stated the growth in numbers of
13 students with intensive needs has grown significantly and maintaining small groups and a small student/teacher ratio
14 is key to success for these students as they progress through the early school years and ultimately, throughout their
15 academic development.
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17 Another audience member, parent, Colleen Wheldon, spoke to the Committee and the Superintendent regarding a
18 recent situation that troubled her that had occurred in the district recently. She said she spoke on behalf of many
19 parents who felt left out when it came to being informed about an apparent bomb threat. The parents asked for
20 transparency and information, citing their need for “teachable moments,” especially, in today’s hyper sensitive
21 climate due to so many school shootings. Dr. Lepore, as Chair, stated the information must be limited due to on-
22 going investigations and he turned to Superintendent Cozort to share what information he could. The Superintendent
23 described the events and explained this posed a challenge in addressing community concerns, because protocols and
24 protection of possible participants must be withheld due to the fact that investigations are still underway.
25 Superintendent Cozort recounted the details regarding a threat made on the telephone to the high school on May 25th.
26 In his conversations with the Principal and the Police Chief, it was determined that this threat lacked credibility.
27 There was a thorough investigation of phone, email, text messages. There were interviews with students and faculty
28 and involvement of NPD, the State Police, the FBI and Verizon. Collectively, it was agreed the threat was not
29 imminent nor credible. On the evening of Sunday, June 3, a social media “firestorm” moved quickly through the
30 community to reignite what was felt to be the previous information. At this point in the evening, and in order to
31 make the safest decision possible for the school community, the Superintendent decided it was prudent to call off
32 school for Monday June 4th. This would allow for appropriate meetings with school administration and law
33 enforcement officials. Superintendent Cozort stated he was careful regarding publically sharing details (or not) in
34 order to keep everyone safe and to protect the civil rights of potential persons involved. He reiterated that Chief
35 Pittman assured him there was no new threat, nor was there new information on the previous threat. Moving
36 forward, Mr. Cozort wrote a public letter and reported the Academic Awards presentations were held Monday night
37 and school opened without incident on Tuesday. He reviewed the new wing closures through the CPS and NHS
38 areas. He reminded the public that while we want to provide very secure measures, we also want our schools to
39 remain a welcoming place for after-school activities, sports, music and community activities and it is necessary to try
40 to find a good balance. Dr. Lepore commented on the Safety & Security Committee and the commitment in
41 maintaining safe and welcoming schools and the large amount of money invested in doing so. Superintendent Cozort
42 also pointed out the design of new schools (such as NIS) versus the older schools takes into account safer design
43 models. Teachers in the audience reiterated they like the protocols in place in terms of school drop off and pickup
44 and the policies that direct the movement of people in and out of the schools both during the school day and after
45 school hours. Finally, the Chair closed public comment.
46

47 **Presentations and discussions of interest to the Committee**

48 **Rotary Conversations**

49 Superintendent Cozort attended the May 16th Town presentation regarding three rotaries, the Bartlett/Surfside, the
50 Sparks/Surfside and the Old South Road. The two that impact Surfside road will certainly affect the school and this
51 generated a lot of discussion. Some people are in favor of the rotaries to alleviate traffic congestion, and some are

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53 not, and instead think a three way stop should be considered. Steve Sortevisk also attended the presentation and stated
54 aloud that nothing that was said at the presentation convinced him that children (and pedestrians) are safer crossing
55 with moving vehicles. Dr. Lepore added “these conversations” have been repeated over and over throughout the
56 years and rotaries are not safe for children to cross with or without crossing guards. He remarked the roads are now
57 busier than ever and stop signs are the only answer. Mrs. Proch asked if the School Committee has any voice on this
58 issue, because she strongly feels they should be part of the conversation. The Superintendent responded that while we
59 are not a deciding factor he would like to meet with Administration and Mike Burns (from Town) to review options.
60 The School Committee asked to have Mike Burns come to a meeting for discussion and hoped he would be able to
61 attend on June 19th. The Superintendent reviewed some of the topics for the 19th and said it was easy to move some
62 to a later date in order to facilitate this discussion. Mr. Sortevisk asked if a timeline on the rotary constructions could
63 be presented, he felt there was zero indication of how fast or slow these rotaries are in the making and would like a
64 better understanding.
65

66 **Marijuana Recreational Use Conversation**

67 The Town has requested the School Committee to make a recommendation to the Town regarding their support (or
68 not) of the Marijuana Recreational Use issue. Steve Sortevisk and Superintendent Cozort attended the presentation
69 regarding the potential pop up of “pot shops” in Nantucket, and because the vote of Nantucket residents approving
70 Medical marijuana, the recreational option is not far away from sanction. Mr. Sortevisk reported that the Select Board
71 can either approve two establishments or can decline approval in which case the issue goes to ballot vote. Ballot vote
72 opens up the possibility of many more shops opening. The School Committee was uncomfortable with the options
73 outlined because it supports the legality of two recreational shops in trying to limit more from opening. Dr. Lepore
74 vehemently stated he is against it all - young brains should not be exposed to this drug and normalizing this is a grave
75 mistake. Mrs. Proch asked about policies concerning legal usage, especially when it came to medical prescriptions
76 and how that may impact students with legal access. The School Committee discussed their position determining
77 that their rallying together to limit where and what they could, would be the most sensible. They collectively asked
78 the Superintendent to speak on their behalf at the Board of Selectmen meeting to recommend no more than two
79 establishments if this is absolute in its decision. Mr. Sortevisk made a motion, which was seconded and approved by
80 the Committee to “recommend that retail marijuana sales establishments be limited to two; and also, to whatever
81 extent possible, edibles be limited.” Superintendent Cozort stated he would share their hope to restrict
82 establishments and told the Committee about an event that happened in NIS concerning a student and edibles. He
83 described a recent situation about a child who came to school and was acting funny only to discover the child had
84 ingested edible marijuana brought from home. He expressed his deep concern with this variant of marijuana.
85

86 **CPS Schedule & Curriculum – Dr. Peter Cohen, Principal Cyrus Peirce Middle School**

87 Dr. Cohen had a handout that addressed some of the concerns expressed at a previous School Committee meeting by
88 Steve Sortevisk. He explained that the changes being considered this year are “tweaks” not a wholesale re-model.
89 He shared some of the challenges to creating a schedule: shared staff with NHS; class sizes; ELL students’ needs;
90 Special Needs students needs; intervention schedules; duties; planning time and many others. He explained that,
91 often, a solution for one problem can create a problem in another area. He discussed the length of blocks (a slight,
92 but not drastic reduction for core courses). He briefed the Committee on Project Based Learning (PBL) and explained
93 that it would still be offered in Grade 7, but for all students rather than a select group.
94

95 The School Committee had some varied questions regarding recess for 6th graders and Core classes versus Encore
96 classes and how the time allotment for these will work. They were also wondering how the Math focus will play into
97 the schedule if there is still much emphasis on literacy. Dr. Cohen strongly feels the literacy part is helping with the
98 Math, because it is often the language of Math that presents problems for many of our students. Mr. Sortevisk
99 expressed his concern that some students needed more math, possibly a second dose. Dr. Cohen responded that they
100 are working to provide extra remedial time for those students who have not demonstrated proficiency, and he detailed
101 that Math in 8th grade will better prepare a student for higher level math and doubling up if this is the desired path,
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104 for taking AP Calculus in senior year. He felt this was a better way to handle the math placements at this time
105 because fewer students are currently exceeding expectations on MCAS and the data of assessments does not support
106 the students to take Algebra I prior to 9th grade. Dr. Cohen also reviewed World Languages – Latin will become a
107 high school offering leaving Spanish and Mandarin for 6-8 grade. There was some focus on more field trips for CPS
108 students and with the shift in Core Curriculum standards for Social Studies, this aligns very well to offer
109 opportunities for trips to Washington D.C. Also there is some conversation to add virtual field trips as a possibility
110 to interweave technology into the experiences.

111
112 Mr. Sortevik asked Dr. Cohen about many areas of the schedule and the impact on curriculum, i.e. how much time is
113 allotted for team meetings as he believes these are essential to the middle school model. He asked specifically about
114 the technology integration position, which has been eliminated. Mr. Sortevik then cited the DESE Digital Literacy
115 Standards and what tech skills are necessary, and is concerned that students will not have enough opportunity to
116 master these skills if not taught as a stand-alone course. Dr. Cohen responded that the technology standards can be
117 taught by teachers through their core curriculum. Dr. Cohen reiterated this schedule is in progress and is not a final
118 edition.

119
120 **Committee discussion and votes to be taken**

121 Vote to Approve Amended Policy JKAA – Physical Restraint of Students

122 Jennifer Iller made a motion, seconded by Steve Sortevik, with none opposed, the motion to approve passed.

123
124 Vote to Approve Congdon & Maglathlin Scholarships 2017 (Seniors and Alumni) \$7,500 & \$1,500

125 Pauline Proch made a motion, seconded by Jennifer Iller, with none opposed, the motion to approve the scholarships
126 passed.

127
128 Vote to Approve the Donation from Poets Corner Press LLC to Nantucket Community School, \$100.00

129 Pauline Proch made a motion, seconded by Jennifer Iller, with none opposed, to accept the donation.

130
131 Vote to Approve the Donation from ReMain Nantucket to Nantucket Community School for Adult Education and
132 GED Prep, \$38,000.00

133 Pauline Proch made a motion, seconded by Jennifer Iller, with none opposed, to accept the donation.

134
135 Vote to Approve the Donation from Ahold Delhaize USA (Stop & Shop) to CPS Gift Account, \$1,497.86

136 Pauline Proch made a motion, seconded by Jennifer Iller, with none opposed, to accept the donation.

137
138 Vote to Approve Field Trip for CPS 7th Grade to Camp “Cody” in Freedom, NH for STEM and Environmental

139 Science lessons, September 24-26, 2018. Superintendent Cozort stated he was delighted to see some field trips and
140 believed having them at the start of school helped to build relationships for the year. He reinforced proper behavior
141 is critical and urged administration to make that clear to students and their parents. Mr. Sortevik added he commends
142 the teachers for taking time from their personal lives and devoting such focus on students by going the extra steps.
143 Jennifer Iller made a motion, seconded by Pauline Proch, with none opposed, to approve the field trip.

144
145 Vote to Approve the May 15, 2018, Workshop Minutes. Jennifer Iller made a motion to approve, Pauline Proch

146 seconded, and the motion was approved.

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148 Vote to Approve the Transfers & Invoices Pauline Proch made a motion to approve, Jennifer Iller seconded, and the

149 motion was approved.

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Superintendent’s Report–W. Michael Cozort

Enrollment

Mr. Cozort reviewed Enrollment for June 1 with one student more to add to the total of 1645. The high school is the largest school now and the space issue presents a challenge. While the building project has definitely helped spread out the enrollment in the lower grades, the upper schools have large classes as a whole.

On the Horizon

The next meeting will be June 19. Superintendent Cozort can shift a few agenda items, but will first verify if Mike Burns can come to the meeting to review the Rotary discussion and plans. There will also be the appointment of the clerk, the last Technology report from Karen McGonigle, Director of Technology, and we will move the ELL and PAC updates to July.

On the heels of the Tech report, Jennifer Iller asked to have an update on the amount of technology use and how it impacts student learning. She was hoping to hear how much time students are using devices during the day and was hoping to have a conversation. The Superintendent felt we could most likely give an approximate idea of the amount of time, but cautioned the kind of use is more important based on what is supervised and what is not. He feels the problem is a larger one when the use is free reign with little parameters which is not the case during the school day.

Subcommittees & Acknowledgements

Sub-Committees: None

Pauline Proch reiterated her praise for the PBL learning and appreciating trying to find out of the box ways to engage students. She asked to have an update to the Student Success Program (A. Viselli’s program in NHS) to the presentation that was at the beginning of the year.

Steve Sortevik noted the PreSchool 25th Annual transportation day, commending the teachers for their efforts and the children seemed to fully enjoy the event.

Mrs. Proch commended Mrs. Mailloux (6th grade Science teacher) science project 6-8 evening, and also the Unified Art program evening at NES and the Academic Awards night at the high school, and stated it was the first time she felt there was a true representation of our student body.

At 8:13 pm the School Committee adjourned on a motion made by Jennifer Iller and seconded by Pauline Proch, and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Logan O’Connor
School Committee Clerk