

Nantucket School Committee
Meeting Minutes
November 7, 2017

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2 Present Members: Zona Butler, Jennifer Iller, Tim Lepore, Melissa Bonvini Murphy, Pauline Proch, Natalie
3 Gammons
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5 The meeting was called to order by Chair, Melissa Murphy, at 6:00 PM in the Large Group Instruction room at NHS,
6 Pauline Proch made the motion, and Tim Lepore seconded, and the motion was approved. Mrs. Murphy welcomed
7 all the attendees to the meeting.
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9 **Comments from the Public**

10 None.
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12 **Presentations and discussions of interest to the Committee**

13 **John & Abigail Adams Scholarship Award- Principal of NHS, Dr. John Buckey**

14 Dr. Buckey shared he loves this presentation as he introduced approximately 35 Seniors (the largest group in his
15 Principalship) who have been awarded the 2017 John & Abigail Adams Scholar Award. This scholarship award
16 offers free tuition to any Massachusetts public college or university and is awarded based upon MCAS combined test
17 scores in Biology, ELA and Math. He mentioned that students have 8 semesters of tuition granted and this can be
18 deferred for up to six years. The students introduced themselves, shared what they were interested in studying and/or
19 what might be their next trajectory path, college or travel or perhaps other options. Some students had an idea of
20 what they may want to study such as Genetics, Nursing, Engineering, Marine Science, or Music. A handful of
21 schools mentioned were Georgetown, UMass Amherst, Boston University & Vanderbilt. The School Committee
22 congratulated them all and thanked them for sharing their plans.
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24 **School Improvement Plans – Principals Kubisch, McNeil, Cohen, Buckey**

25 Principal Kubisch shared that she felt the plan was a bit more manageable as the school is now smaller and the
26 School Council is smaller. The goals are: Goal One—to improve academic achievement; Goal Two—to establish
27 building wide instructional routines and protocols to support differentiated instruction; Goal Three—to create a
28 positive classroom and school climate and provide a safe and nurturing school; Goal Four—to involve NES families
29 and community members in the education of our children; and Goal Five—to identify and provide quality professional
30 development opportunities for staff. For the first goal the focus is to help improve test scores by better tracking and
31 analyzing data and assessments to help monitor progress. There has been discussion about changing the Standards-
32 Based Report Cards to eliminate #4 level (Mastery) and and better calibrating teacher assessment. Mention was
33 made regarding keyboarding and learning on a computer device, as much of the testing is now done on a device. The
34 second and third goal remain fairly consistent as the previous year. NES continues to create balanced classrooms for
35 all students, continues to function with Responsive Classroom protocols, continues the bullying prevention plan, and
36 perform safety drills. One thing Mrs. Kubisch has added is once a month all school morning meeting. This was
37 impossible with the numbers of students in the school prior to this year, but with half the population having an all
38 school assembly or meeting is much more manageable and offers a supportive and communal enhancement to regular
39 routines. Finally, outlined in the fifth goal, providing professional development for faculty continues and training
40 for Aspen has been extended outside the classroom for parents to better understand these systems. In an effort to
41 boost morale, Mrs. Kubisch mentioned doing small gestures to enhance the appreciation quotient of staff. Finally,
42 with the lower numbers of staff, evaluations can be more thorough and comprehensive and deadlines are more easily
43 obtainable, without rushing to finalize the evals and observations. The School Committee thanked Mrs. Kubisch.
44 Mrs. Proch was concerned about playtime for small children and hoped NES did not lose sight of this in lieu of
45 finding time to keyboard, for example. Mrs. Murphy was curious about looking at scores for third graders now that
46 that grade is no longer in the NES, and Mrs. Kubisch assured her that the primary school combs through the third
47 grade assessment data as it reflects all of the instruction (K-3) that is reflected on the state scores.
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49 Principal EveMarie McNeil presented her first School Improvement Plan, a new plan for Nantucket Intermediate
50 School. While the plan evolved from previous plans of other schools, it is largely a new work with its own set of
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Strategies and Indicators of Success. The School Council for NIS is very small and she hopes to add a few more members in the near future. Goal One-to focus efforts on increasing student achievement, assuring curriculum is aligned with state and national standards. Grades 3-5 now have common planning time every week for each grade, including ESL and SPED teachers, to help them progress toward this goal. Horizontally and vertically aligned instructional methodologies are designed to “tighten” the teaching and create common experiences. The collaboration is to foster well-structured lessons that align with the MASS Standards. Also in this goal, Eureka Math will be fully implemented in all grades. Goal Two-to establish and promote a positive and safe learning culture, based on shared beliefs and core values. Mrs. McNeil stated that the focus should be: what do students need? Students need good modeling, consistency and a positive environment to best grow and learn. We can easily accommodate this with positive working relationships, whole school assemblies, collaboration and respectful interactions throughout the school. This will increase students’ overall well-being and decrease the use of student support center, school nurse or guidance visits, and minimize many behavioral issues. Goal Three-to promote and nurture school partnerships with families and communities is a continuation of reaching out to keep the communication open and encourage families to be active in their children’s education. Mrs. Iller asked about parent coffees, concerned they might not be as effective as they once were. Superintendent Cozort agreed that perhaps there are other ways to reach out to parents and this is something to consider. Mrs. Butler wanted to revisit the keyboarding question and thought aloud that it is important at this age that students start to learn this technique. Mrs. McNeil agreed, but was also unsure of how to fit keyboarding into the schedule when there is so much already stacked into a regular day. Mrs. Murphy reminded everyone that technology use has been mentioned in the Strategic Plan overhaul and how it no longer is its own area, but rather should be interwoven in all learning and educational practices. Mrs. Murphy thanked Principal McNeil and was very enthusiastic regarding the collaboration focus for the NIS plan citing she thinks it is the single best thing for a new school!

Principal Peter Cohen was next, producing a School Improvement Plan that he stated was a natural progression of the goals set forth from 2013, but now the main focus is solely on improvement of student achievement based largely on MCAS, PARCC and MAP testing data. As a directive from the Department of Education, the test results (mediocre for CPS) establish a new baseline for comparison results and therefore, the School Council has dialed in on identifying where we need the most work and how to improve achievement. CPS has a very large Council and Dr. Cohen thanked them for their work on this SIP. While the areas of what will drive the Goals were listed 1- 8 as values and areas of concentration, the primary goal is: Student Achievement. The objectives are focused professional development, time for the curriculum development, and data informed instruction. Dr. Cohen stressed that strategies, scaffolding and support are the main components and underlining this is knowing the MASS Framework standards. He opined that if we know our assessment data and the students as individuals, we can better target areas where growth is needed. He was also enthusiastic about creating student developed digital portfolios, which will allow students to track their own performance. Mrs. Butler was appreciative of the robust plan, but failed to see the measurement of progress and hoped that Dr. Cohen could show more indicators of success to support his plan. Dr. Cohen responded that he provided this because his directive is to unequivocally increase student achievement and better the scores, and these initiatives are his strategy in how to accomplish this directive. Mrs. Butler was not convinced and she urged him to add another column to show the tracking of each initiative. Superintendent Cozort added that Principal Cohen and Assistant Principal Donna Johnson have triangulated data from MCAS, MAPS and report cards and have profiled each student to show comparisons of each individual student, so that it is not just about the MCAS. He continued that parents want to see the scores in relation to the child’s grades and this is how a better assessment can be illustrated. Mrs. Iller stepped in and queried how to accomplish this when the grading system is a Standards-Based Grading with no numerical grades to compare. Dr. Cohen reiterated his view on how SBG is much more comprehensive, as it reviews each standard specifically to better show strengths and weakness of an individual student. Mrs. Murphy offered if the standards are being taught presumably mastered, then we must find the disconnect with the performance outcomes. She added “...it would be nice if every student could have an IEP.” She asked Dr. Cohen to add the 5th column showing measurement. Miss Gammons asked a few questions regarding learning how to take a test and whether students know material or not. She also felt that what happens in the classroom is vital to learning specific skills.

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The final School Improvement Plan was brought to the Committee by Dr. John Buckey, NHS Principal. He consistently offers three-year plans and this year’s plan will cover 2017 – 2020. He feels a three year plan better aligns with the Strategic Plan initiatives and reviewed his four Goals: One-to increase academic achievement; Two-to ensure a safe culture and climate for all students; Three-to increase communication and connections with families and community and to expand the use of technology for instruction and communication; and Four-to improve the working and learning culture of NHS while integrating the new Assistant Principal into the leadership structure. Dr. Buckey provided an addenda with his measureable goals in percentage format, also showed a rolling average for that category and then specific percentages of the current graduating class. He was brief in his presentation as it continues the work from previous years always with the eye on upward trends in every area. Mrs. Butler shared that she thought there could be some added detail specifying some of the strategies that would help accomplish certain objectives. The Committee thanked him and all the Principals for the work on their plans.

English Learners Update – Directors of EL, Kelly-Ann Cooney

New EL Director, Kelly Cooney, opened her presentation with a mission statement of the English Learner Program: to provide research-validated, systematic, explicit and sustained language instruction to English Learners and to develop social, instructional and academic language within the four language domains: speaking, listening, reading and writing, in conjunction with subject matter content. The ultimate goal is to provide skills to enable students to be college and/or career ready. Ms. Cooney provided an extensive amount of information to the School Committee, showing the total number of EL students as of October 2017 at 293, which has increased from the previous year count of 255. We have seen a 651% increase since 2005 which is unprecedented. She provided information on what grades the students are in, their proficiency levels, the different countries and languages represented. She shared the WIDA Performance definitions about how students are measured, examples of test questions that our EL students encounter, and she gave MCAS score information. She was very pleased to share that, on the ACCESS, 65% of our students made progress compared to the state at 51%. This is evidence we are meeting with some success and she was pleased that our systems currently in place are working in a positive way. She thanked her staff, reviewed a few new next steps for the upcoming year, and notified the Committee that we will once again be up for the Coordinated Program Review (Spring 2018) and she will be focused on making sure we are in compliance. Dr. Lepore shared that he appreciated her energy and knowledge. Mrs. Proch asked if the State can mandate EL students opting out or not from specific classes. Ms. Cooney said this area is federally mandated, but her hope is that students remain in those classes as long as they can as it is advantageous for them to do so.

Math Report III, Mathematics at Cyrus Peirce Middle School – Principal Peter Cohen

Throughout the year, Mr. Horton, Director of Curriculum & Assessment for STEM, has presented Math Reports that focus on different areas of Math education at NPS. This third installment concentrates on Cyrus Peirce Middle School Math and the students in grades 6-8. Dr. Cohen’s presentation states the problem as: Math scores have remained flat. He reviewed some historical outlines that began in 2013-2014 with the Math Task Force. Recommendations were made by Looney Consultants, who worked with the CPS teachers to implement strategies to increase achievement during that academic year. CPS began to “double dose” students in Grade 6, giving them two math blocks instead of just one, splitting the curriculum between two teachers. When that was determined not to be having the desired impact, the model in 6th grade was that the second math teacher would provide remediation to those who needed it. CPS has, in effect, two Math Intervention teachers, but still MCAS and PARCC scores have been flat. For 2017-2018, CPS has added to Math intervention an increased emphasis on literacy and added support for EL’s. Dr. Cohen also created math intervention progressions and math acceleration options in order to help some of the stronger math students move forward before eighth grade. His presentation next offered some comparisons of the PARCC and MCAS scores. Additionally, he showed the comparison of the Project Based Learner students and their MCAS scores, showing there is little difference in the scores, and therefore supports that PBL is not a hindrance to Math learning, rather it provides an alternative method of teaching. Dr. Cohen stated the timeline allows us to examine the data and make adjustments. We want to improve the math achievement scores and we want to find how to help students who struggle as well as students who excel. Mrs. Iller offered she felt this seemed like a positive

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155 step forward. Mrs. Murphy thought this showed innovation and efforts to find solutions for understanding math
156 better. Superintendent Cozort commended the middle school for continuing to search for a model that maximizes
157 student math achievement for all levels of students.
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159 **Homeschooling Report – Director of Curriculum & Assessment, STEM, Michael Horton**

160 Mr. Horton shared that there are only two students, one in 3rd grade and one in 8th grade this year. He feels the two
161 might not be a true representation of the homeschooling numbers, but these are the only official plans that have been
162 submitted. He added he discovered this year an online accredited public high school that is free and recognized by
163 the State. This might be a contributor to our low number. He reiterated that we live in a small community and often
164 we ‘know’ who is where, if not in school, but we are not canvassing neighborhoods and the onus is not on us.
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166 **Committee discussion and votes to be taken**

167 Vote to Approve Donations to NHS Landscaping & Gardening Program from: Plumbers Supply, \$191.18, Surfing
168 Hydrangea Nursery \$664.00, Island Lumber Company \$63.75, Marine Home Center \$250.28. Tim Lepore made a
169 motion, seconded by Pauline Proch, with none opposed, the motion was approved.
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171 Vote to Approve District Calendar 2018-2019. Pauline Proch made a motion, seconded by Tim Lepore, with none
172 opposed, the motion was approved.
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174 Vote to Approve the October 24, 2017, Meeting Minutes:

175 Jenn Iller made a motion to approve the minutes, Zona Butler seconded, and the motion was approved.
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177 Vote to Approve the Transfers & Invoices

178 Tim Lepore made a motion to approve the transfers and invoices, Jenn Iller seconded, the motion was approved.
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180 **Superintendent’s Report–W. Michael Cozort**

181 **Enrollment**

182 For the month, we are up two students overall. This month we also showed the new Entries and Withdrawals, with
183 most of the withdrawals a result of some families moving off island.
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185 **On the Horizon** – Superintendent Cozort discussed the opportunity of having a Workshop for the next November
186 21st meeting and perhaps an Executive Session that same day. There will be an MCAS response, a Preliminary
187 Budget Forecast for the regular meeting.
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189 **Subcommittees & Acknowledgements**

190 Sub-Committees:

191 Jenn Iller stated the policy meeting will be meeting November 8 in the morning.
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193 Melissa Murphy gave a shout out to NHS Credit for Life Fair, stating it was so well represented and her daughter, a
194 Senior, said it was terrific. Mrs. Murphy also thanked everyone for coming out for the *Run4Robin* fundraiser, so well
195 attended by practically the entire community in honor of the late Robin Harvey. She also wanted to add to the
196 Horizon, a Safety and Security update in light of all the terrible happenings in our world lately. She thought it would
197 be good to reassure our constituents that we continue to be mindful of this for our district.
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199 At 8:57 pm the School Committee adjourned on a motion made by Tim Lepore and seconded by Jenn Iller, and
200 unanimously approved.
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202 Respectfully submitted,

203 Logan O’Connor, School Committee Clerk