

Nantucket School Committee
Meeting Minutes
February 6, 2018

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2 Present Members: Zona Butler, Jennifer Iller, Tim Lepore, Melissa Murphy, Pauline Proch & Natalie Gammons
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4 The meeting was called to order by Chair, Melissa Murphy, at 6:00 PM in the Large Group Instruction room at NHS.
5 Tim Lepore made the motion to approve the agenda, and Pauline Proch seconded, the motion was approved. Dr.
6 Lepore made brief mention of our previous Superintendent, Dr. Robert Pellicone, passing a few days earlier due to a
7 battle with illness. Dr. Lepore paid tribute to Dr. Pellicone, who presided “during turbulent times in our district and
8 that he made some good changes” on behalf of our students and faculty. Dr. Lepore and Mrs. Murphy offered their
9 condolences and blessings on behalf of everyone, to Dr. Pellicone’s spouse, Brett.

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11 **Comments from the Public**

12 Mr. David Dickson, community member, addressed the School Committee repeating his comments at previous
13 meetings of his dismay at the MCAS scores. He again cited percentages and stated his feelings about Charter
14 schools, specifically announcing to the Committee that it is his opinion our Administrators, staff and NTA should be
15 visiting these high achieving schools to glean from their practices in how they are successfully reaching their students
16 more “disadvantaged” than ours and that they are achieving the higher scores. Mrs. Murphy asked if what Mr.
17 Dickson was saying was different than a memo/email that he had earlier that day sent to a large portion of the
18 Administrators, some Town Finance personnel, and a few additional persons. Mr. Dickson was unhappy with being
19 interrupted and not being able to finish his comments within his allotted time. Mrs. Murphy expressed her
20 understanding, but shared that he has been given a great deal of time at previous meetings and she wanted to
21 ascertain if he had new information to share.

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23 Superintendent Michael Cozort asked to address and respond to Mr. Dickson’s comments, both here and in the memo
24 shared with the Finance Committee. He acknowledged that Mr. Dickson has often brought forth data that indicates
25 improvement is needed, particularly in math. Mr. Cozort indicated he has conceded this need for improvement many
26 times and spent a considerable amount of time with Mr. Dickson to share what the district has done and is doing to
27 rectify this weakness. The district knows its data and has spent five School Committee meetings this year (two on
28 MCAS and three on district initiatives in math) that Mr. Dickson did not attend. Mr. Cozort expressed his frustration
29 that Mr. Dickson, in his opinion, cherry-picks the data that highlights district shortcomings and makes scant mention
30 of data that might show the district is having some success. He also stated that some of the data points that are
31 mentioned need context, such as the increase in English Language Learners (more than 600% in a little over ten
32 years) in the district. Mr. Cozort was careful to point out that these children can and do learn, but some of them may
33 need more time as they try to assimilate into a new culture and learn a language that is foreign to them.

34
35 Mr. Cozort challenged Mr. Dickson’s assertion that Charter Schools are outperforming our public school. He
36 acknowledged that the Brook School, which Mr. Dickson lauds, has met with success with many ‘at risk’ students.
37 However, he pointed out that Charter Schools do not play on an even playing field with public schools in that they do
38 not have many of the parameters that public schools have. Mr. Cozort encouraged Mr. Dickson not to reduce the
39 performance of the district or its students to their scores on one assessment (MCAS). He stressed that we are
40 expected to help children grow physically, socially and emotionally in addition to academically. He offered many
41 examples of student success in the district. In conclusion, Mr. Cozort encouraged Mr. Dickson to look for the
42 positives of which there are many.

43
44 Mrs. Murphy acknowledged Mr. Dickson’s concerns about the academic issues and asked the School Committee if
45 they wished to hold a Workshop to discuss the district’s data further. Mrs. Butler stated that she felt a workshop
46 would be a good idea. She did address Mr. Dickson directly to say that she has been involved in the school system
47 for over two decades, and had three children go through this district and feels comfortable stating that prejudice does
48 not exist in this environment. Mrs. Iller felt that the Workshop was held already, Dr. Lepore thought Mrs. Butler’s
49 viewpoint was interesting and because she has a unique perspective, he supports the idea of Workshop. Mrs. Proch
50 agreed. Mrs. Murphy stated that she will confer with the Superintendent to coordinate this. Mrs. Murphy thanked
51 Mr. Dickson and closed the Comment section moving on to Presentations for the School Committee.

Nantucket School Committee
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Presentations and discussions of interest to the Committee

Social Studies Curriculum Update – Director of Curriculum & Assessment, Humanities, Jean Garen Witt

Mrs. Witt began her presentation referring to some documents available to the public to review and better understand the scope and content of the revisions of the Social Studies frameworks. These frameworks have not been revamped since 2003 and the documents illustrate what has changed. Mrs. Witt reviewed the difference of a standard and a curriculum framework and the overarching ideology that these are meant to outline not how to teach, but what we want our students to learn. She broke down the timeline of implementing these new frameworks, June 2018 will be the final revisions stage presented to the Department of Education and the target to phase in and roll-out in districts is June 2020. The major changes in the History and Social Science arena is the emphasis on Civics Education and deepening understanding with a criteria of rigor, clarity and coherence. This means adjusting how the curriculum is taught throughout the grades, and putting an emphasis on civics at an earlier age. The guiding principles are based on the legacy of democratic government, diverse perspectives on historical and current events, with data analysis and media literacy. Also, making this content more accessible to ELL and SPED students is an important focus. Mrs. Murphy wondered if the curriculum resources are accessible to everyone. A community member asked from the audience if this will impact the high school teachers more, by their teaching certain classes based on their individual expertise in a certain area of the social studies curriculum. Mrs. Witt responded that it is always encouraged for teachers to have knowledge in their content area that works vertically and horizontally. Mrs. Witt continued to outline the scope and sequence starting at PreK / 1st grade up through 12th, and ultimately that the amount of credits in secondary school is recommended to increase from 3 years to 4 years, 2 years of United States history and 2 years of World History. The frameworks are based on ten guiding principles based on what is effective curriculum and 21st century skills, with explicit connections to English Language and Literacy Standards, news and media literacy, SEL (social and emotional learning) and the aforementioned attention to the needs of ELL students and Student with Disabilities. The assessment of this has yet not been decided, but it has been conveyed that there will not be a test added to the state requirements until at least 2021. Mrs. Witt indicated that she will meet with faculty and review the pending changes. If this is adopted officially, she thinks it would be prudent to begin curriculum development during the summer, articulate a PreK-12 revised scope and sequence, determine Professional Development needs, and examine the impact on curriculum resource materials. Her ideal timeline is to be ready for the 2019-2020 academic year to phase in over time. She is excited with these changes and thinks it will be received with positive response.

The School Committee felt this seemed a reasonable attempt to improve what is already being taught, and that it was rich in curriculum. A Committee member expressed this new outline would work well with PBL learning styles in CPS. Miss Gammons, Student Council Representative, liked the changes especially for 8th grade, because she thinks it will make the content more engaging for students. She wanted to know how this might impact the current AP US History course and Mrs. Witt said it will be up to districts to determine. Finally, Mrs. Murphy asked how parents will be updated and Mrs. Witt stated it was important to wait until everything is in place before really rolling out the information.

Innovations Pathways Grant – Dir. of C&A–Humanities, Jean Garen Witt and Dir. of ELL, Kelly Cooney

Mrs. Witt and Ms. Cooney were very excited to share about the Innovations Pathways programs that will benefit students and the Nantucket Community by offering all students opportunities (pathways) to be career and college ready. The key to this grant is the focus to be on traditionally under-represented students (low-income, students of color, ELL, disabilities and potential first generation college). Applying for the Innovations Pathways Grant, while a very long and detailed process, has reaped a \$10,000 starter fund to invest in students now, because it will help to create strong partnerships with employers to provide students career awareness and the opportunities to participate in courses and experiences relevant to achieving industry credentials. Nantucket already has a very strong School to Career program, and this will act as an umbrella to strengthen the connection with careers and fields necessary and vital to the community, predominately Marine Sciences and Healthcare. Already, partnerships are in place with Egan Maritime, UMASS Boston, Nantucket Cottage Hospital. A large emphasis of this initiative is providing equitable

Nantucket School Committee
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February 6, 2018

103 access to higher education as a priority and breaking down barriers by actively recruiting students. It can offer career
104 exploration, guided pathways with career planning and extra student support. There will be a requisite number of
105 hours required for credits, with a learning plan and final experience student projects such as an oral presentation, a
106 written report or a video. In the first year, this will be open to 28 students via a lottery system, and in three years the
107 hope is to increase the number of students to 64. Zona Butler stated she is intrigued by the grant, but wants a better
108 handle on the whole process and was curious about “parent buy-in.” She expressed worry that we do not want to
109 encourage students *not* to go to college. Dr. Lepore agreed with Mrs. Butler, but stated we have a lot of successful
110 people here who have not gone to college and that both avenues exist, developing skills is important.
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113 **2nd Quarter Food Service Program Financial Report – Director of Finance, Martin Anguelov**

114 Director Anguelov reviewed the program through the month of December, citing an operating deficit of \$38,620
115 versus a surplus of \$11,982 for the same period the year prior. The operating deficit increased by approximately
116 \$50,000 largely because of a \$17,376 increase in product costs in stocking a new kitchen and due to an August
117 freezer failure in the high school kitchen, resulting in a loss of \$6,000 worth of product. Personnel costs have
118 increased this year (\$28,201) with the new positions in the Nantucket Intermediate School. Sales have declined due
119 to a \$10,334 ala carte sale decrease in comparison to last year. Further the Free & Reduced meals represented 36.4%
120 of totals meals served versus 37% for the same period last year. All these calculations still show an optimistic track
121 to remain within the budgeted \$56,000 subsidy and a continuation of the positive trend of deficit reduction over the
122 last three years. Chartwells, by our contract, must remain within this subsidy amount or must pay us a penalty when
123 the final numbers come through at the end of the year. Dr. Lepore wanted to know the breakout of the Free (30.3%)
124 and Reduced (6.1). Superintendent Cozort offered that these numbers were no surprise, we anticipated the increases
125 with the new school opening. Mrs. Iller was curious about student lunch debt and how those numbers were faring
126 and while the Superintendent did admit they recently seemed to creep up, vigilant work by the Central Office the
127 Principals and Assistant Principals, especially at the two Elementary schools, resulted in a swift turn around,
128 dropping the outstanding balance almost immediately.
129

130 **School Committee Self-Evaluation**

131 Mrs. Murphy reviewed that Self Evaluation was revised last year and the Committee discussed about when to have
132 their own evaluations returned to the School Committee Clerk for collation. It was decided to have February 23 as a
133 good day to submit their answers and that would support presenting the Self Evaluation in March.
134

135 **Committee discussion and votes to be taken**

136 Vote to Request to Authorize School Committee Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Education Appropriation, Article Eight.

137 *“On Motion, duly made and seconded, It was Voted: to recommend \$29,269,642 for the FY2019 Nantucket Education Public*
138 *Appropriation (Article Eight of the 2018 Annual Town Meeting of Taxpayers). The public school total budget appropriation is*
139 *recommended at \$28,819,642 - \$23,629,022 for payroll and \$5,190,620 for operating expenses; and an additional \$450,000*
140 *Community School appropriation for payroll. And to AUTHORIZE use of School Department accounts as listed.*

141 Tim Lepore made a motion, seconded by Pauline Proch, with none opposed, the motion was approved.
142

143 Vote to Accept Donation from Egan Maritime Institute to CPS Gift Account for CPS Maritime Studies, \$20,001.75.

144 Pauline Proch recused herself from the vote. Tim Lepore made a motion, seconded by Jenn Iller, with none opposed,
145 the motion was approved.
146

147 Vote to Approve the NHS Field Trip for Culinary Arts to ProStart Culinary Competition in Worcester, MA

148 March 5&6, 2018. Pauline Proch will be joining the group as a chaperone on this trip. Tim Lepore made a motion to
149 approve, Zona Butler seconded, and the motion was approved.
150

151 Vote to Approve the NHS Field Trip for All Cape Music Festival in Barnstable, MA, February 1-3, 2018. Tim

152 Lepore made a motion to approve, Pauline Proch seconded, and the motion was approved
153

Nantucket School Committee
Meeting Minutes
February 6, 2018

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155 Vote to Approve the January 16, 2018, Budget Hearing Minutes. Jenn Iller made a motion to approve the minutes,
156 Pauline Proch seconded, and the motion was approved.

157
158 Vote to Approve the January 16, 2018, Meeting Minutes. Tim Lepore made a motion to approve the minutes,
159 Jennifer Iller seconded, and the motion was approved.

160
161 Vote to Approve the Transfers & Invoices. Tim Lepore made a motion to approve, Pauline Proch seconded, and the
162 motion was approved.

163
164 **Superintendent’s Report–W. Michael Cozort**

165 **Enrollment**

166 Superintendent Cozort reviewed the Enrollment numbers with 2 more students this month adding to the total of 1639.
167 He noted that looking at the Enrollments and Withdrawals, it is hard to match up students who are only leaving for
168 20 days versus students who have actually left the district. There was again discussion among the Committee about
169 why students are moving in and out. Mrs. Butler asked about traditional truant officers and Mr. Cozort remarked that
170 our Social Worker, Mrs. Kingston often does home visits and our SRO’s Thompson and Mansfield are another
171 source when it comes to students being out of school for no reason. Mrs. Butler wants to know more of “why”
172 students are coming or going and she asked the Principals about their individual cases. Mrs. Cooney replied that she
173 thinks a fair percentage is ELL families. Mrs. O’Connor who reviews and tallies the enrollment numbers reiterated
174 that at least 75%, if not more, are ELL families coming into and leaving the district. The rest are standard reasons of
175 housing issues: students moving into other districts or coming from another district, and young children in PreK who
176 have been screened now moving into the district officially.

177
178 **On the Horizon**

179 March will have the Self Evaluation of the School Committee and also the beginning process of the Superintendent
180 Evaluation. There was discussion about a Workshop for Superintendent Evaluation and the coordination of the Eval.
181 Dr. Lepore and Mrs. Butler will be the key Committee members to accomplish this task. Also, Michael Horton will
182 have the District Report Card and the Science Curriculum Update. The Superintendent also took this opportunity to
183 unveil a collaboration with NCS that Sheryll Reichwein from the Community School Adult Education and Kelly
184 Cooney have been working on – an Interpreter/Language Connection that will formally train people (community
185 persons and/or 11th, 12th grade students) to be official Interpreters to help the constituents of the district. The course
186 will provide scholarships if needed and the return payback is the promise of hours worked. He believes this will be a
187 terrific partnership with NCS. There was discussion about the predominant language being Spanish, but Dr. Lepore
188 reminded that Portuguese would be important too as that population is growing on island.

189
190 **Subcommittees & Acknowledgements**

191 Sub-Committees:

192 There is no update for Strategic Plan at this time. TA Negotiations continue at this time, and they are optimistic it
193 might conclude soon.

194
195 Mrs. Murphy asked how we as a district are being sensitive in our response to the TPS issue at hand. Superintendent
196 Cozort shared the Director of ELL, Mrs. Cooney, has twice organized meetings – a “Know Your Rights with TPS
197 and DACA” and to have attorneys be present for our immigrant population for free presentations and consultations.
198 Both meetings have been postponed due to weather related issues, but we are continuing with the effort.

199
200 At 8:02 pm the School Committee adjourned on a motion made by Jennifer Iller and seconded by Pauline Proch, and
201 unanimously approved.

202
203 Respectfully submitted,
204 Logan O’Connor, School Committee Clerk