

**Nantucket School Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**March 20, 2018**

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2 Present Members: Zona Butler, Jennifer Iller, Melissa Murphy & Pauline Proch  
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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 Mrs. Murphy asked the Committee to amend the agenda, postponing the Superintendent Evaluation to a newly  
6 scheduled meeting on March 27, 2018. She also reminded the committee of the SC self-evaluation to be presented at  
7 a meeting in April. This motion was made by Zona Butler, seconded by Pauline Proch and approved by the  
8 Committee.  
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10 **Comments from Public**

11 Mr. David Dickson had two comments: The first comment reflected on a previous School Committee meeting from  
12 the Fall of 2017, where Principal and Superintendent Coffees and lack of attendance, were discussed. There was  
13 conversation to perhaps curtail or cancel holding these coffees because of a lack of interest. Mr. Dickson strongly  
14 opposed, “100% against” cancelling these opportunities to meet with and listen to the different Administrators. He  
15 feels these coffees are informative and recently the better attendance should be enough proof that they are a welcome  
16 opportunity for communication. Mr. Dickson’s second comment was regarding Teacher Evaluations and the access  
17 of them on our website for only 2015-2016. He stated that every tenured teacher (93 teachers in our district) received  
18 either Proficient or Exemplary in rating, not one found rating of Needs Improvement. He feels this indicates the  
19 evaluations are not taken seriously and cannot be a good measure based on the plummeting MCAS scores. He stated  
20 the inflated evaluations tell the community that the scores are the students and parents fault, and do not have anything  
21 to do with the teaching methods. Chair Mrs. Murphy thanked Mr. Dickson for his comments and reminded him the  
22 reason the coffee discussion was because of the attendance numbers and it was felt there needs to be a higher impact  
23 value. Teacher and parent, Mrs. Tracy Mailloux, spoke from the audience to offer 8:00 am coffee times are not  
24 optimal for many and perhaps scattering the times would offer more alternatives and therefore, better attendance.  
25 Teacher Anthony Suppa also spoke from the audience thinking aloud that different locations off campus might be  
26 something to consider.  
27

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

29 **Student Support Services – Michele Brady, Director of Special Services**

30 Director Michele Brady distributed a two-page chart broken out into services and roles of the SSS that support the  
31 students. The breakdown is by school and Full Time Equivalents, each section with a listing of responsibilities. Our  
32 Student Support Services are comprised of regular on staff and contracted staff: Guidance Counselors, School  
33 Psychologists, Social Workers, Nurses, School Resources Officers, Teaching Behavior Specialists, Behavior  
34 Analysts, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, and Speech & Language Therapists. Because we are an  
35 inclusive district and all support services happen “under one roof” rather than at different locations throughout a town  
36 or a city, we offer ALL these many different services to help our students succeed. The School Committee had a  
37 number of questions, in particular, how the schools handle the various safety drills and practices for students with  
38 special needs. Mrs. Kubisch, Principal of NES shared that the early year drills are practice drills with conversations  
39 with teachers and students and the expectations associated with how the drill will carry out. She mentioned it is a  
40 fine line for the practice notifications and the simulation of a real drill to keep the procedures authentic. Principal of  
41 the high school, John Buckley, said there is equipment on site for the students that need this type of assistance to help  
42 with the evacuation practices in order to vacate the buildings. Another Committee member asked about evaluations  
43 of special needs students, the IEPs in particular, screenings for PreK students, and what is the percentage of requests  
44 for such evaluations. The response from the principals was about the process before an evaluation even takes place  
45 and Mrs. Brady quickly reviewed how so many staff people are working in conjunction with one another when  
46 discussing the appropriate needs for a child no matter what the issue might be. Superintendent Cozort supported the  
47 work being done and reminded the Committee of the increase to the PreK program, because we see these needs  
48 unfolding in our population. He further reminded the Committee of the budget presented earlier in the year asking for  
49 some FTE increases to support this enrollment. (As the numbers change every year, seemingly going up, we need to  
50 seek more funds to increase staffing). Also questioned was the amount of contracted services and Mrs. Brady  
51 reviewed the various consultants that assist teachers in many ways, both program and services consultants.

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The island factor plays a role in these instances, Superintendent Cozort opined, because on the mainland a consultant can piece together a .4 or .5 in two different districts to create a fulltime position. In Nantucket, we may only need one .4 or .5 and finding someone to fill only a part time position can be tricky, especially with these specialized vocations. We have been fortunate this year to hire some specialized therapists for on staff positions which is financially beneficial as well as location beneficial by having someone here on island versus commuting. We are not the only district struggling with these supports, the services are hard to fill.

Chair Melissa Murphy asked if the chart provided could in the future, offer some additional details, more of a historic breakdown of data, with the number of students on 504's or IEPs and that it would be helpful to the Committee to view these numbers. The Superintendent stated the Special Needs Update report in May would provide more of these details. The Chair also asked Mrs. Brady, now that she has been in our district for a handful of months, where are the challenges from a new Director's perspective? Mrs. Brady said we need to add another Speech and Language therapist and the Team Chair positions at school, both of which are reflected in the preliminary budget numbers. Also, Mrs. Brady feels the timelines are important and aligning practices to follow as well as defining disabilities and where is the right place to intervene. She briefly mentioned the Behavioral Health committee is an important group and how helpful these meetings are in bringing community resources together, collaborating on these specific issues.

**Special Needs Advisory Council (SNAC) – Michele Brady, Lora Kebbati, Secretary & Shawna Larrabee, Social Media Contact**

Mrs. Kebbati introduced herself and Mrs. Larrabee and mentioned missing but also active members, Jess Douglas and Laura Steele. SNAC has gained strong momentum during the last months. She offered the newly established by-laws to the School Committee and reviewed that SNAC meets once a month and is a public meeting, ½ the meeting is a business meeting with an agenda and the other ½ of the meeting is less formal and more a parent support group. The board recently created a mission and Mrs. Kebbati stated the agendas that were once small, are now very full. There is a lot of activity, a lot of programs offered, a lot of presentations and a large pool of local talent and support persons and she feels it is all very collaborative. SNACs main goal is to make parents and guardians aware of what SNAC is and how it can be used as a resource and she encouraged anyone to attend. She also thanked Mrs. Brady the Director of Special Services for being a “key ingredient” to the group, stating that Mrs. Brady is a true liaison with lots of contacts and a wealth of information. Mrs. Murphy thanked SNAC for coming and suggested to the School Committee to create a sub-committee for the upcoming reorganizational meeting, to include SNAC and as an opportunity for the School Committee to have someone directly connected. She also urged SNAC members to reach out to the School Committee any time.

**Friends of Nantucket Public Schools – President Hadley Dutra**

Mrs. Dutra, President, offered a three page handout with a quick review of what FONPS does throughout the year, the current budget numbers and a breakdown of the current Staff Initiated Fund (SIF). *Friends* exists to provide supplemental materials and programs that are not necessarily covered in the school's budget and strives to enhance and support what is already provided throughout the district. The Executive Board is a brand new group with a new position added, Community Liaison. She stated FONPS is always looking to add to the board membership and urged anyone to consider joining. The meetings are public and open. She then reviewed the different funds available to students and staff, scholarships offered, some Enrichment information, and annual fundraisers that happen throughout the year. Zona Butler had a question specifically about the Children's Fund (a needs blind scholarship that awards \$85 per student towards an extracurricular activity) and how students find out about this fund. Mrs. Dutra said it is posted on some websites and she is hoping guidance departments mention the opportunity when and if they know a student may wish to participate in something that might not otherwise be financially available to them. She then mentioned new to this year, the recently established Fund. \$1000 is awarded by the Nantucket Bank to a person of the month, who was Maria Partida (FONPS board members) for January. This fund was voted by FONPS to help a MCAS program brought to the attention of the board by Michael Horton, Director of Curriculum & Assessment – STEM. Every year Title I funds provide money to tutor students who need additional help to boost

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103 their MCAS scores. Mr. Horton was trying to find a way to entice parents and students to have better attendance in  
104 these tutoring sessions by holding them in the evening and offering dinner as an added bonus. The tutoring includes  
105 student sessions and Parent University sessions, and now, food. He was seeking assistance with the food portion –  
106 this is a perfect fit for FONPS. Jennifer Iller jumped in, stating her overall enthusiasm about the Sign Up Genius  
107 used for the Holiday House Tour and liked that the sign up opportunity was email blasted to parents to reach out to  
108 people that might not otherwise know about the volunteer needs. Mrs. Dutra agreed it is always a challenge to get  
109 volunteers for all we do. In wrapping up, the Superintendent remarked with thanks that FONPS has donated to the  
110 district throughout the years, over \$2 million dollars!  
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113 **Committee discussion and votes to be taken**

114 Vote to Accept Donation from Friends of Nantucket Public Schools to the CPS Gift Account for NHS Wood Shop  
115 Program, Field Trip to the Dreamland to see the movie “Wonder” \$500.00. Zona Butler made a motion, seconded by  
116 Pauline Proch, with none opposed, the motion was approved.  
117

118 Vote to Approve the March 6, 2018, Meeting Minutes. Postponed to next meeting.  
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120 Vote to Approve the Transfers & Invoices Zona Butler made a motion to approve, Jennifer Iller seconded, and the  
121 motion was approved.  
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123 **Superintendent’s Report–W. Michael Cozort**

124 Mr. Cozort wished to make a quick response to Mr. Dickson’s earlier Evaluation comments and said he would pull  
125 the recent Evaluations to review.  
126

127 Superintendent Cozort brought up the Student Walkout in NPS, coinciding with the national Walkouts of students in  
128 schools on behalf of the recent event in Parkland, Florida. He congratulated the Students for their very well  
129 represented and carried out ‘Student Walkout’ - It was completely organized by students. Principal Buckey and  
130 Assistant Principal Psaradelis were closely monitoring the organizers and the progress of this walkout to ensure it  
131 was meaningful and respectful. Originally, the students were to go outside, but due to the bad weather, they stayed  
132 inside. Over 75% of the student body attended, filling the Hall of the Whale and CPS students trickled in down the  
133 hallways. He admitted he had a bit of anxiety, due to not knowing the response of the students, but he was very  
134 proud by what they said, the way they spoke, and how other students reacted. “It makes me proud to remember what  
135 youth can accomplish.” Mrs. Proch asked about the video of the walkout and will it be available for viewing. He said  
136 it was in process of editing and would be soon be ready. Mrs. Iller asked to have Veritas students (largely  
137 responsible for the walkout) to join in a School Committee meeting for a presentation.  
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139 **On the Horizon**

140 It was decided to hold another 5:00 pm Workshop session to continue the review of the Superintendent Evaluation  
141 and then it would be presented in a regular public meeting at 6:00 as a single item agenda, all on Tuesday, March 27,  
142 2018 (required to be completed by the end of the month). The School Committee Self Evaluation will be moved to  
143 the April 10<sup>th</sup> meeting. April 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting has been cancelled due to the Annual Town Meeting starting that evening.  
144 The Town election will be on April 10 – Mrs. Murphy suggested it might be good to hold the reorganizational  
145 meeting the morning after on April 11<sup>th</sup> to review the Task Forces and Assignments for the Committee.  
146

147 Mrs. Iller spoke that retired Superintendent Kelly has reached out to her and previously, has written to other School  
148 Committee members about adding an agenda item for discussion regarding the Marching Band. She would like to  
149 put this on an agenda and invite Erik Wendelken, Music Teacher in NHS. Mr. Kelly provided past information about  
150 the marching band and sent dated pictures.  
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**Subcommittees & Acknowledgements**

Sub-Committees: The Policy Sub Committee continues to meet (almost through the J policies) and a Safety & Security meeting is scheduled.

As part of the Organizational meeting, Mrs. Murphy thought it should be a consideration to add SNAC.

Mrs. Proch had a number of things she wished to mention: One, she raved about the Culinary Team and their competition at ProStart. She was a chaperone and attested how nerve wracking it was watching the team getting graded from the moment they stepped into the room, throughout their cooking, demonstrations, cleaning, etc. They placed third and earned scholarships, it was an amazing experience. Two, she was very complimentary about the Music Man, the school Spring Musical and it was filled with talented individuals of a huge student age range and thanked Laura Gallagher Byrne, former CPS Music Teacher and also Erin MacIver, current NHS music teacher. Three, she offered information regarding the Nantucket Project, now providing Winter options as well as the main Fall workshop. She sits on the committee with CPS Principal, Peter Cohen, and was very excited about some of the current offerings, one dealing with community prejudices (citing the recent graffiti to the African Meeting House) and also mentioning the Jamaican Lacrosse Team going to Israel for international play and that five of our Nantucket students (diverse in cultural backgrounds) are participating. She mentioned a specific presentation from Adam Foss, a presenter who educates and helps people of color who will be speaking on March 30 at Bennett Hall. And finally, she wished to advocate to the public about a conversation on Monday evening in the MPW Auditorium surrounding substance abuse. It will be facilitated by Dr. Buckey, Dr. Tim Lepore, Chief Bill Pittman and others. She reaffirmed that we are no different than any other district and we must face the reality that is happening with our communities regarding drugs and alcohol. She stated that while “kids will be kids” the stakes are higher now. She commended Dr. Buckey for his reaction to the recent unfortunate events in the high school regarding possible drug overdose.

Mrs. Iller circled back to the Safety and Security issue and said she has been approached by many people to make a change in the morning parent dropoff at NES with regard to walking their children into school and to their classrooms. As the safety and security committee is constantly re-evaluating, NES has multiple entrances and exits and it is time to close off those open access points. Currently, it is very difficult to know who is in the building and this needs to be tightened up with a better policy in place. She said NIS has a good system now as the Principals greet the families at the door and the children go to their classrooms on their own. While she understands this will not be met with approval from all families, she feels today’s climate warrants the stricter policy and there needs to be a forum or some way to bring this to the NES families for discussion. She is seeking the School Committee approval and looked to the Principal of NES, Kimberly Kubisch for feedback. Mrs. Kubisch said she brought this to the School Council but there have not been any hard conversations as of yet, but they need to be held. Mrs. Iller stated a thorough plan needs to be in place and the SRO’s should be included. Mrs. Murphy said she philosophically agrees, but is sensitive to the roll out. Mrs. Butler reiterated this is good to bring up and get it out in public conversation as we are here to protect our youngest, and while change is hard this is a reasonable discussion to hold. Superintendent Cozort strongly felt the Committee and Administrators need to be unified about this decision because the backlash may be strong as we have already seen at NIS. There were a lot of comments from the public, with ideas of what might be good to do for policy, a routine, how to roll this idea out, i.e. a forum and many teachers and staff in the audience echoed their agreement in tightening the security, especially in today’s climate and with the current violence in schools around the country. Wrapping up, Chair Melissa Murphy directed the NES Principal to make the deciding factor of how to proceed regarding this issue.

At 7:36 pm the School Committee adjourned on a motion made by Zona Butler and seconded by Jennifer Iller, and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,  
Logan O’Connor  
School Committee Clerk