

Nantucket School Committee
Meeting Minutes
November 6, 2018

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2 Present Members: Zona Butler, 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 NHS Long Group Instruction Room.
5 A motion was made to approve the agenda by Pauline Proch, seconded by Jennifer Iller and was approved by the
6 Committee.

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8 **Comments from Public**

9 None

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

12 **Pre-School Presentation – Pre-School Teacher, Kim Albertson, NES Principal Kimberly Kubisch and Director**
13 **of Special Services, Michelle Brady**

14 Mrs. Albertson shared a graph depicting the enrollment trends from 2010 to present for the Special Needs PreK
15 numbers and they show a substantial increase. In 2010 there were 15 children and in 2018 there are 31 and
16 maintaining a small teacher student ratio of 1:5 is the key to the program success. With this spike it would be
17 impossible to hold to these ratios without adding staff. She indicated it is hard to predict the student numbers year to
18 year. She said the children are an active and “fun” group and the staff is constantly reinventing their programs to
19 reach children with all kinds of needs. She was very proud to remind the School Committee of the PreK being
20 recognized multiple times as an Exemplar in Outreach Services and for Intervention with the classroom by the
21 Department of Education (during the CPR review that occurs every three years). Mrs. Brady jumped in and reviewed
22 the legal requirements outlining Child Find’s mandated regulations on how and when and where to reach out to
23 families. This helps to monitor and assess students for early intervention. Mrs. Brady also talked about philosophy
24 and program models and how they can differ among districts. Some can screen for “role model” students or “at
25 risk” students, some programs are half day, some are full. The essential component is to balance all of the needs and
26 provide support as students transition to Kindergarten. It is also important to watch the students move through the
27 system as they age with the hope that they can move off of IEPs or 504 plans and no longer require this kind of
28 intervention. Mrs. Kubisch reviewed past practice and what the district provided for intervention, language skills,
29 routine, modeling, therapy of OT and PT, isolated and/or group work. She described our current numbers of four
30 integrated classrooms: 31 IEPs, a large number of English Learner students, a handful of students in process for
31 eligibility in October (which is 7) and about needing to add to current staff in order to continue to provide
32 comparable intervention. She thanked the Superintendent for being so active in quickly allowing the hiring of new
33 TA’s to help maintain the low ratios. She also was happy to share two of the new hires are bi-lingual and speak
34 Spanish which is tremendously helpful.

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36 Superintendent Cozort offered his rationale behind the Central Office renovation and that it stems largely from the
37 PreK enrollment increase. Moving the ELL and SPED administrative offices out of the Elementary School allows for
38 more classroom space, which is needed in order to go to universal pre-school. Steve Sortevik asked about the
39 renovation and how quickly could this happen (might it be September 2019) to alleviate the space issue in NES? Mr.
40 Cozort replied that he does not believe it can be done in time for September. The Superintendent also mentioned the
41 Special Ed Stabilization Fund which was originally set up as a hedge against unforeseen residential tuitions, sharing
42 that this might be a source for unexpected pre-school enrollments as well. Dr. Lepore thought aloud knowing the
43 number of births on island from the hospital can possibly help with the numbers game of prediction. There were a lot
44 of questions from the Committee about capturing the children through outreach and screenings, home visits, language
45 barriers, parent workshops, teacher workshops, advertising and how do we know families are aware of the programs.

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47 **Preliminary Budget Forecast FY 20 – Director of Finance, Martin Anguelov**

48 Mr. Anguelov offered the Preliminary Budget forecast and reminded the School Committee this is early in the
49 process and the figures start out with the roll forward numbers without any additions. The projected estimated
50 budget appropriation for FY20 is \$29,595,089 with payroll being \$24,511,469 (83%) and expenses at \$5,057,620
51 (17%). These percentages are right on target from the prior year which were 82% and 18% in the same categories.

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The increase is approximately \$750,000 which makes sense because over the last years we have an approximate 500-750 hundred thousand increase and with our enrollment up and staff numbers higher, this is not a shocking upswing. The School Committee had a number of questions regarding the appropriation and the numbers from Town. The Superintendent and Finance Director both commented we have to prioritize and determine what is most important and there is no guarantee that we will have that kind of funding. We also need to remember \$133,000 of the increase of last year was a one-time increase for Technology funding so that money is not part of this projected FY20 number. Mr. Cozort finished up saying this is always a collaborative process and when the different departments and schools present their budgets, we will determine what is most important and what we can allocate and where.

Transportation Numbers- Superintendent W. Michael Cozort

Superintendent Cozort gave a quick update on the transportation numbers provided by Mrs. Linda Bayard Barrett. The numbers are from October and while slightly down from the previous year, the main Old South and Nobadeer routes have status quo ridership from last year, approximately 45-50 students. The report shows fewer riders in the afternoon, but the variable is sports and extra curriculums. He commented how it is hard to find bus drivers which is a problem everywhere, not just unique to Nantucket. Dr. Lepore asked about getting the NRTA involved now that they are year round and felt the collaboration would be beneficial for both. The Superintendent answered the district has not yet approached the NRTA, it seems there might be a few things to consider before that would be an option.

Homeschooling – Director of Curriculum & Assessment-STEM, Michael Horton

Michael Horton presented a graph to the School Committee that shows the Homeschool numbers for the last three years. There were four, then two, and one student this year. While there may be students we do not know about who are homeschooled, there are a handful of students (7-10) on Nantucket who are taking an online MA State approved program, but these are not considered homeschooling. Mr. Horton shared that, by statute, it is the parents responsibility to inform the school, apply and get approval for their son or daughters’ homeschool program. Mrs. Butler thought for sure we are missing some students and how do we find them. Michael Horton said many staff in our district get involved in the registration/withdrawal process and he agrees that while we do not know of them all, he feels we reach out as well as could be expected. He stated some families are doing a nice job homeschooling - it provides flexibility, can accelerate or slow down individual learning, can help skip grades if desired, and some families choose to travel extensively as part of their learning experiences has to be considered an enhancement.

However, there may be some parents who simply are not doing a good job homeschooling, yet they are entitled to this decision if they so choose. Jennifer Iller asked if parents/guardians have to check in during the year and was curious if they can participate in school activities. Mr. Horton stated they must provide a June progress report. It was mentioned that homeschooling becomes harder once students get into high school. He also affirmed that students can be part of school sports and clubs, but do not qualify for MCAS testing.

Election Site Discussion

Mr. Cozort thought with today being the election day, this would be a good day to have this conversation. While some days the election does not interfere with a school day, such as this day, other election days happen when school is in session. Many people feel the election site should move from the school grounds and many feel the school is a community space and is the natural place that should always hold elections. Steve Sortevik asked if the School Committee should make a formal request to the Town to move the location. As a retired Social Studies teacher, he feels the civics side of him is in favor of it being in the school and he used it in his teachings about voting rights and elections, but now as a School Committee member, he feels it hinders the Safety and Security of our school. Mrs. Butler said this conversation needs to be heard and locations should be suggested for relocation. Each Committee member weighed in their feeling about the school as a location and offered a few possible alternatives, one being the “new” VFW. Dr. Lepore feels the school is the building to use and perhaps we should consider moving our school calendar around to make it work. The Superintendent reminded the Committee that doing that creates challenges as we do not always know the date of a ballot when we approve the calendar. It was agreed that this was something that should be discussed with Town government.

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Committee discussion and votes to be taken

Vote to Approve District Goals for 2018-2019

Pauline Proch was happy with her suggestions being woven into the Goals as was Jennifer Iller. After a brief discussion, Jenn Iller made a motion to approve, Pauline Proch seconded, and the motion was approved with and Zona Butler abstained

Vote to Approve Budget Planning Calendar for FY20

Jenn Iller made a motion to approve with the understanding there would be a few changes and additions, Steve Sortevik seconded, and with none opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve Donation from Hayward Photography Inc. to CPS Gift Account \$1,823.66 Pauline Proch made a motion to approve, Jenn Iller seconded, and with none opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve Donation from Hayward Photography Inc. to NES Gift Account \$2,791.99 Pauline Proch made a motion to approve, Jenn Iller seconded, and with none opposed, the motion was approved

Vote to Approve the October 30, 2018, Meeting Minutes Steve Sortevik made a motion to approve the minutes, Pauline Proch seconded, and the motion was approved.

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

Superintendent's Report--W. Michael Cozort

Superintendent Cozort went over the Federal Grants for this year and showed the comparison to last year. In FY 18 the total in grant money was \$595,646 and in FY 19 (current year) the total is \$610,396. He briefly detailed the four distinct Title grants (I-remedial reading,II-professional development, III-ELL and IV- Safe Schools). He also talked about the IDEA (SPED) monies that were a slight increase. Mr. Sortevik wondered if fifteen thousand is a good increase and Mr. Cozort replied he welcomes any increase and a figure in the \$600,000 range is significant.

Enrollment is down by 10 students, and noted the high school is full. Mr. Cozort mentioned the library renovation and how terrific the project turned out. He applauded Lori Robbins, Becky Hickman and Diane O'Neil for their tireless work. He additionally thanked the Nantucket Historical Association and Egan Maritime for providing some great artwork pertaining to Nantucket history.

Subcommittees & Acknowledgements

Policy - There will be a policy meeting next week.

Jenn Iller shared she overheard at Morning Mass at Church that some of the NHS Band Members and some NCMS members will play music at the Veterans Day ceremonies. She is very pleased.

Steve Sortevik asked about the Superintendent Search and Tim Lepore reported good progress being made. A facilitator is being selected and the Committee is being finalized. He asked School Committee members to think about Focus Groups they would like to attend and they signed up on the spot.

At 8:16 pm the School Committee adjourned on a motion made by Jennifer Iller and seconded by Steve Sortevik, and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Logan O'Connor
School Committee Clerk