

Nantucket School Committee
Public Relations Workshop Meeting Minutes
June 25, 2019

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2 Present Members: School Committee members Zona Butler, Jennifer Iller, Timothy Lepore, Pauline Proch, and
3 Steve Sortevik. Additional attendees: Superintendent Michael Cozort, Deputy Superintendent Elizabeth Hallett

4 The meeting was called to order at 4:40 PM in the Community School conference room at 56 Center Street.
5 Chairman Jenn Iller opened the workshop with Pauline Proch making a motion to approve the agenda and Zona
6 Butler seconding. It was approved unanimously. Jenn Iller shared there would be no votes and free range of
7 discussion.

8 **Student Behavior**

9 Concerns were expressed about student behavior, especially at the middle school level. Despite the addition of a
10 Dean of Students and Alternative Ed program, CPS has continued to struggle and has not developed a concerted
11 discipline system. The Superintendent stated he did not disagree, and that he was confident that Ms. Lamoly would
12 institute some changes that provide a more systematic approach to a firm, fair and consistent model.

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14 Mr. Cozort added that student behaviors are something that concerns administrators at every level. The increasing
15 numbers of students with mental health and/or emotional challenges combined, sometimes, with a lack of parental
16 cooperation has challenged schools across the Commonwealth and the country. There was discussion about policies
17 and handbooks and both teacher and administrative buy-in. Deputy Superintendent Hallett suggested a book read by
18 administrators of *No Such Thing as a Bad Kid* by Charles Appelstein.

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20 **Substance Abuse**

21 There was general agreement that students in this day and age are experimenting earlier with tobacco, alcohol and
22 illegal substances and with deadlier consequences. As Zona Butler stated, “We know the problem, so what are we
23 going to do about it?” She stated that she believes we are too often turning a blind eye to it. The Superintendent
24 countered that we are not ignoring the issues, but they are sometimes hard to prove. Vaping was discussed and it was
25 explained that we have consequences for using and possessing vaping paraphernalia. However, the devices are very
26 easy to conceal so detection is a challenge.

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28 Committee members discussed a number of things we might consider, including more education of students (in
29 health classes), parents (mandatory meetings?), coaches (mandatory trainings) and greater consequences for
30 violations. Mr. Cozort shared that we have helped Fairwinds write a grant (Tower) to provide a trained Substance
31 Abuse provider for students in the schools. As yet, that person has not been hired.

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33 **Technology Use**

34 Several Committee members began by sharing with Deputy Superintendent Hallett that no one is against the 1-to-1
35 computer initiative, but the concerns voiced by some parents is that they are given the Chromebooks to bring home in
36 6th grade without ensuring they have had the proper training around Digital Literacy. Mr. Cozort stated that was
37 supposed to happen this past year with the middle school librarian providing instruction to the 6th grade. Mr.
38 Sortevik responded that did not happen, as he understood it, because the library did not open in the beginning of the
39 year. Mr. Cozort responded that should not have been dependent on the library space. The School Committee made
40 it clear that this needs to happen in the coming year, prior to the devices going home. They also expressed that
41 parents should be required to attend an orientation prior to issuance so that they better understand what controls they
42 can put in place at home.

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44 **Standards-based Reporting**

45 There was a brief discussion about how student progress is reported, with the general consensus that it is not a
46 concern at the primary or intermediate levels, but many middle school parents have expressed how confused they are
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by the CPS system. Mr. Sortevik added that the dual system (report cards and *Jump Rope*) has added an extra layer to what teachers must do at the end of each trimester. Mr. Cozort stated that this is on his list of items to discuss with Ms. Lamoly and that he was sure that she would meet with her staff to try to develop a better roll out for staff and parents.

Homework

Dr. Hallett asked if we have policy established and Mr. Cozort responded in the affirmative (Policy IKB and accompanying Rules and Procedures). He explained that it generally follows the 10 minute per year rule of thumb, i.e. 2nd grad = 20 minutes; 5th grade = 50 8th grade = 80 minutes and so on. Jenn Iller shared that the problem has been that, in general, there has been more homework in elementary school and less in middle school and then kids get slammed with it in high school and aren't prepared. Mr. Sortevik stated that there is a misperception that the middle school does not give homework. The other issue is that some teachers have not agreed with the SC policy that homework cannot count for more than 10% of a student's grade and that this should be re-visited.

School Start Times

This was a parking lot item for some time. Although recognizing the research on this topic, Committee members quickly pointed out the challenges to implementation on Nantucket: 1) bus schedules; 2) athletic schedules; and 3) the need for older students to be available to supervise younger siblings after school. The item is tabled.

Uniforms

Ms. Iller explained that this issue has surfaced before as a result of concerns about some high school students (and a few middle school too) pushing the limits on appropriate dress. Administrators have done a better job addressing this, but it still comes up periodically. Uniforms, some feel, would be a way to level the playing field between the haves and have nots. Again, some members feel that if we started with an implementation of this at the primary school and built it up each year, we could eventually accomplish the goal of K-12 uniforms. Jenn Iller reminded the members that this idea did not garner a support of the majority when surveyed a few years ago. What to do?!

Strategic Planning (District Improvement Plan)

Superintendent Cozort displayed the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis done by building administration and department heads in October and updated again at the end of this year. They are available for review in the central office. This effort, which Dr. Hallett would like to rename as District Improvement Plan is a high priority for her work beginning on July 1st.

Administrative Evaluations and Salaries

Superintendent Cozort informed the Committee that evaluations for the Administrative Team have been completed and are available to SC for review. Salary increase for the coming year were established at 2.5%.

At 6:45 p.m. the School Committee adjourned. A motion made by Steve Sortevik, seconded by Tim Lepore was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Cozort
School Committee Clerk, Pro-Tem