

**Nantucket School Committee**  
**Workshop Meeting Minutes**  
**October 8, 2019**

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2 Present Members: Jennifer Iller, Timothy Lepore (arrival 4:29), Zona Butler, Pauline Proch, Steve Sortevik, and  
3 Deputy Superintendent, Elizabeth Hallett  
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5 The workshop was called to order when a quorum was present, by Chair, Jennifer Iller at 4:00 PM in the Nantucket  
6 District Conference Room. Steve Sortevik made a motion to approve the agenda which was seconded by Zona  
7 Butler, and the Committee approved unanimously. The Chair motioned to move to a Workshop with the same  
8 persons approving.  
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10 **2019 MCAS Data Workshop “Deep Dive”**

11 Deputy Superintendent, Dr. Elizabeth Hallett & Director of C&A, Michael Horton, in collaboration with the NPS  
12 Principals presented to the School Committee, MCAS data with accountability as the focus (versus assessment as the  
13 focus from last meeting). The School Committee each had their own Chromebook to follow along in live time as Mr.  
14 Horton directed them to the Department of Education website. He showed them how to maneuver through the  
15 website to find certain strains of information, and for this presentation, they were looking under the tab for  
16 ‘accountability’ which shows the percentage target numbers for each school and how the numbers are derived from  
17 sub group data. Mr. Horton recapped how the cumulative average percentages for NIS, CPS and NHS are calculated  
18 to drive the target value which is 75%. Each school accountability percentage is individual to that school and carries  
19 with each school as its own benchmark. Mr. Horton pointed out interpretative materials at the bottom of the website  
20 page that gives descriptions and terminology to help understand how and why Nantucket fared. Dr. Hallett fielded  
21 some questions from the School Committee: what happens where there are no numbers showing, what about heavy  
22 numbers in one area and not in others (referencing high needs groups being lumped together such as ELL and  
23 Economically Disadvantaged). Mr. Horton stated that looking at the district data is not the best way to review the  
24 information and it makes more sense to look at each school independently. Dr. Hallett then directed the School  
25 Committee to look at the “takeaways” (attached addendum sheet for each school supplying statistical data), hear each  
26 Principal’s interpretation of their school’s performance and their explanations pertinent to this in-depth view.  
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28 Nantucket Elementary School: Principal Kimberly Kubisch pronounced she has no accountability data, because  
29 there is no formal testing at this grade level. But, she added, her staff looks at third grade trends to watch  
30 progression, and they do use assessments three times per year such as Access, AimsWeb, Fountas & Pinnell  
31 Benchmark. While school performance is very close to the state levels for Meeting and Exceeding, there were some  
32 overall trends to help shape her takeaways; attendance and absenteeism are factors for time on learning and, writing  
33 response continues to be an area requiring more focus for both Math and ELA. She offered some remediation  
34 structures already put into practice to support improvement: three 8-week learning cycles to target specific needs of  
35 all students in grades K-2 utilizing ability grouping, pacing calendars provided to staff to be sure all units are  
36 covered, calibrated scoring for writing expectations and math unit assessments, vertical articulation for Eureka Math  
37 and Foundations as well as vertical alignment of pretests and posttests with common rubrics for writing. Mrs. Kubisch  
38 shared some of her goals, one of which is to improve literacy student achievement with at least 80% of students  
39 performing as expected and improvement in math student achievement with at least 80% of students performing at  
40 2/3 or higher proficiency. The School Committee liked the upward direction. Pauline Proch asked about students  
41 learning keyboarding and computer comfort at that age level prior to taking the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade test on a computer. Mrs.  
42 Kubisch talked about Kindergarten access to computers, and library media (technology) skills taught during library  
43 time. Steve Sortevik asked about Eureka Math and is everyone using this learning tool for Math. Mrs. Kubisch  
44 outlined the last three years, how each grade embraced Eureka Math at a different pace, but now everyone in NES is  
45 using this system.  
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47 Nantucket Intermediate School: Principal Evemarie McNeil was excited to share this was the second year of meeting  
48 and exceeding targets set by the state in ELA and Math, and the best news is that both are showing growth. She broke  
49 down details of her subgroups, giving percentages in both ELA and Math for grades 4, 5 and 6 (her 5<sup>th</sup> grade test  
50 takers of the previous year). She found some interesting areas to note: a weak component, the 5<sup>th</sup> grade Math scores,  
51 might be related to frequent staff turnover and could explain some inconsistencies. She also offered a general

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observation of implementing a new teaching program (Eureka math) taking time to learn. Her remediation focus is to continue the work in both ELA and Math with a stronger focus on differentiating instruction for all students and to collaborate more between classroom teachers and ESL/Intervention/Special Education teachers to support alignment of practice. She mentioned the ability to overload the young brain when material is delivered in multiple ways. Focusing on student attendance and stressing to families about time on learning are also very important. Mrs. McNeil is establishing regular data meetings to continuously assess student progress through various assessments. She also shared her Goals which include emphasis on essay response writing for students, and for staff, support of newer teams through Professional Development, peer observations, coaching and feedback. She complimented her staff for visiting colleague classrooms to learn from one another. The School Committee was curious about identifying students who need more help or are part of subgroups that need stronger support. Mrs. McNeil responded she knows who the students ‘are’, and Mr. Horton added that SASID in Aspen helps direct data as well as Edwin Analytics. Zona Butler asked why we cannot know them (students) specifically, and can we match Free & Reduced information with the students who might fall into certain subgroups, but Mrs. McNeil reminded her this is a violation of civil rights and we must rely on our data. The conversation led to access and equity, and Mrs. Butler asked about penmanship, specifically cursive, and was curious if this is still taught in schools, wondering if this is interfering with writing. Mrs. Proch added she feels it is important for fine motor skills, hand eye coordination and brain development and furthered this might come back in future years and show up as a problem – she queried the possible lack of handwriting as an impact on social emotional learning with journaling/writing and this working therapeutically. Both Mrs. McNeil and Mrs., Kubisch assured the committee that there is handwriting, cursive as well as manuscripting lessons happening at both NES and NIS.

Cyrus Peirce Middle School: Principal Julie Lamoly, coming into CPS for her first year, can only report on the data and look forward to best practices in the future. She reviewed her takeaways and lauded the Math achievement of students meeting targets or having solid growth. She discussed the subgroups of low performing students meeting targets in both achievement and growth in both ELA and Math and EL students gaining progress toward Proficiency. While each grade overall did better than previous years, one area in 8<sup>th</sup> grade Math fell flat in meeting expectations and there was no growth either – she wonders why this may be and needs to look deeper to find the answer. Her remedial strategies are to continue focus on improving strategies in all classrooms to support growth through PD, EWD and team meetings. She also hopes to raise expectations for students and mimics her concern for attendance rates for all students, especially economically disadvantaged students. Better communication with all CPS families is imperative and important. She offered her Goals looking at Administrators, Staff, Counselors and Systems concentrating on improving student learning, improved attendance, and championing students at risk, providing interventions. The School Committee had a multitude of questions about student attendance and absenteeism, excused versus unexcused, the long vacations families take as an extended leave, or the laissez faire attitude to being on time or being in school daily. Mr. Horton added our scoring in DESE is impacted greatly with absenteeism by losing points used purely for statistics and data. There was further discussion about the process of notifying parents via email, letters, Robo calls, home visits, all to abate the issue – Mrs. Lamoly hopes to improve to 95% attendance.

Nantucket High School: Assistant Principal Jennifer Psaradelis delivered the information on behalf of Principal John Buckey and was happy to share the high school has 100% participation in all three subject areas for MCAS – ELA, Math and Biology. The lowest performing subgroup exceeded their target in all three areas, the Hispanic/Latino group exceeded their target in ELA and Math, the dropout rate improved, the absenteeism rate dropped, and the Biology & ELA results showed students exceeding and meeting percentages above the State. Areas to watch are the cohort graduation rates needing attention and the number of students exceeding and meeting expectations is below the State in Math by 3%. NHS remedial consideration is to focus on the 4-year cohort and further develop alternative paths for students to graduate, perhaps this is a five-year plan. Also, development of common benchmark assessments in all three areas and investigate ways to improve cross curricular connections. Ms. Psaradelis furthered, absenteeism has been heavily addressed in many areas to ensure students are in school, attending class, able to access credit recovery and described how when a student gets into high school, moving forward through the grades is truly

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up to the individual student. Mr. Horton added the state looks favorably on extended education, supporting students who are working hard to complete their requirements for graduation. He talked about some data points that impact our target rate, 118 students falling into a category of outside the traditional four-year path. Mrs. Proch asked about students coming into school with interrupted education, or age/grade differences, SLIFE students and how do these placements impact the overall data. Ms. Psaradelis reiterated that it is a case by case situation and often students in these scenarios start at a slightly lower grade and progress at an individual rate. Ms. Cooney, Director of ELL, concurred the coding in Aspen coincides with placement of these students and it has been working well in the recent years. Dr. Hallett added this situation is similar for many districts who struggle with similar issues. Ms. Psaradelis addressed the NHS Goals for the coming year, how they would like to utilize EWD to take data and inform assessments and instruction. They would like to explore MAP testing for the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, seeing the effectiveness of it in CPS, and using this assessment to better understand the Freshman data. There is conversation about creating a taskforce to look at testing fatigue and how that impacts test result outcomes and a desire to incorporate more technology assessments to better prepare students for Next Generation testing (all of which is now online versus paper/pencil). And finally, to use ACCESS data to understand more clearly, how to help the EL students needs, course offerings and placements.

In wrapping up the presentation, Mr. Horton briefed the School Committee on a MCAS Resource Center for more information and a place for the Committee to discover release practice questions.

At 5:55pm the School Committee adjourned on a motion made by Pauline Proch and seconded by Steve Sortevik, and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,  
Logan O'Connor, School Committee Clerk