

Nantucket School Committee
Meeting Minutes – Remote Participation via ZOOM and Youtube
February 18, 2021

Present Members: Chair Pauline Proch, Vice Chair Jennifer Iller, Zona Tanner-Butler, Dr. Timothy Lepore, and Steve Sortevik. Also present from the Studio, NCTV Representative Ross Trussault and presenters as guests Superintendent Elizabeth Hallett, Director of Technology, Jennifer Erichsen, Director of C&A Humanities, Jennifer Rabold, Teachers Leslieanne Brannigan, Eliza Koso, Lauren Murray, Blythe Purdin, Marita Scarlett, Rachael Sullivan, & Jean Witt - Meeting is a Remote Participation Meeting via “ZOOM” in compliance with Governor Charles Baker’s mandate during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM, by Chair Pauline Proch who followed with reading into the Minutes, scripted instructions for procedure of this meeting under COVID requirements:

Read into the Meeting Minutes at the Start of the Meeting - Confirming Member Access:

This is Pauline Proch, Chair of the Nantucket School Committee. Permit me to confirm that all members and persons anticipated on the agenda are present and can hear me. Members, when I call your name, please respond in the affirmative: Jennifer Iller, Vice Chair, Zona Butler, Tim Lepore, Steve Sortevik, Secretary.

Staff, when I call your name, please respond in the affirmative: Superintendent Elizabeth Hallett; School Committee Clerk, Logan O’Connor; Director of Technology, Jennifer Erichsen, Director of C&A Humanities, Jennifer Rabold, Teachers Leslieanne Brannigan, Eliza Koso, Lauren Murray, Blythe Purdin, Marita Scarlett, Rachael Sullivan, & Jean Witt.

Good evening. This Open Meeting of Nantucket School Committee is being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker’s Executive Order of March 12, 2020, due to the current State of Emergency in the Commonwealth due to the outbreak of the “COVID-19 Virus.” In order to mitigate the transmission of the COVID-19 Virus, we have been advised and directed by the Commonwealth to suspend public gatherings, and as such, the Governor’s Order suspends the requirement of the Open Meeting Law to have all meetings in a publicly accessible physical location. Further, all members of public bodies are allowed and encouraged to participate remotely.

The Order, which you can find posted with agenda materials for this meeting allows public bodies to meet entirely remotely so long as reasonable public access is afforded so that the public can follow along with the deliberations of the meeting. Ensuring public access does not ensure public participation unless such participation is required by law. This meeting will feature public comment. For this meeting, Nantucket School Committee is convening by video conference via Zoom Webinar App as posted on the Town’s Website identifying how the public may join.

Each vote taken in this meeting will be conducted by roll call vote.

The Chair called the meeting to order. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Steve Sortevik, seconded by Jennifer Iller and was approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Comments from the Public

None.

Superintendent’s Report

COVID-19 Vaccination Update

Superintendent Elizabeth Hallett stated a survey went to staff about vaccine interest. Of 360 surveyed, 293 responded with 254 saying they would vaccinate, 26 are unsure and 13 said no. Some of the staff, PT, OT, SLP, nurses, and a few others are already vaccinated. As we enter Phase II, Step III NPS staff should be up next to get vaccinated. Dr. Hallett has been meeting with Gary Shaw and Michelle Epps from the Nantucket Cottage Hospital to determine the best plan rollout with the least disruption to our daily schedules. The district nurses along with Dr. Lepore are available to help support any option. Two that sound the most plausible: 1) Have a mobile vaccine designation on campus, similar to the drive through testing options at Nantucket Cottage Hospital, or 2) Block time at the VFW and offer appointments. Dr. Hallett assured everyone we are very close, and we can see the ‘end goal’.

School Calendar

Superintendent Hallett offered the fourth draft of the School Calendar for 2021-2022, illustrating a few changes. Taking into consideration recommendations from staff, December 23 has been added as a no school day to flank and pad an already

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short holiday break. Also, Juneteenth, now specified as an official Massachusetts state holiday, falls on a Sunday, therefore, we will observe the day on Monday, June 20. PreK will start on September 13. Dr. Hallett is hoping this might be the final draft and the calendar can come to a vote at the next meeting. Steve Sortevik thanked the Superintendent for the calendar changes, commenting he thought this draft will be well received. Chair Pauline Proch said the changes reflect input the School Committee had received. Mr. Sortevik, on the vaccine topic, shared he is worried about the new variant of COVID-19 and hopes the vaccine rollout will happen soon. He asked how the School Committee can help convince the hospital and/or the state to help get our staff immunized. Dr. Lepore lamented the slowdown of getting the vaccine is at the state level. Chair Proch mentioned this topic was discussed at the Legislative Breakfast that she and Mrs. Zona Buter recently attended. Mrs. Proch stated Representative Dylan Fernandez felt the islands were doing well in their obtaining vaccine and were not slowed down in the process, but Mrs. Proch and others do not share that same confidence.

Presentations and discussions of interest to the Committee

Technology Safety Issues, Acceptable Use & Social Media – Director of Technology, Jennifer Erichsen

Director of Technology Jennifer Erichsen began citing why changes are needed to the Social Media Policy and how this affects our daily use in and out of school. She pointed out the importance of education regarding the responsibilities of being both a NPS staff member and a valuable member of the community and how those roles interact when it comes to technology. She stated there is much to learn as well as address in order to follow Federal and State Guidelines which she reviewed for the School Committee and they include: CIPA - Children’s Internet Protection Act, FERPA – Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, COPPA – Children’s Online Privacy Protection Rule, & DESE – Department of Elementary & Secondary Education. A newly established Student Data Privacy Consortium (SDPC) is a one stop shopping community/clearing house of resources that is helping to consolidate privacy agreements and help districts ensure internet sites and learning platforms are compliant with all the aforementioned guidelines.

Emphasizing how our goal is to teach digital citizenship and educate regarding cyber security, Mrs. Erichsen clearly stated, if a staff member or student is using a “npsk” login to access or utilize our website and materials, those individuals are representing the school district. She reviewed the established Acceptable Use Policy and Agreement for both school and families and demonstrated why it is an arduous task to successfully get every family to sign the AUP, especially this year with the pandemic. She is working to expand the family portal to help accomplish higher percentages of families in signing this agreement, mostly because we are doing so much online work this year and it will likely continue regardless of hybrid, remote or full in person learning. Protection continues in-house with the district using GoGuardian to monitor content and use by students and staff, controlling access to certain sites (including social media like Facebook or Instagram), also providing teachers with a tool to keep students on task and identify students at risk. Mr. Sortevik asked if staff has been notified to contact the Technology Department about using new apps or websites with their online learning platforms, and if they (or families) do not sign the AUP, are they blocked. Mrs. Erichsen said they do need to request permission for access to ensure the sites are complaint and furthered she could block, but part of the process is to educate. Each specific request is handled individually. Mrs. Erichsen said it is a balancing act in how to protect versus provide, support internet safety, and also maintain freedom of speech. She finished her presentation circling back to the importance of the Social Media policy and offered to the School Committee the following quote: *“Whether or not an employee chooses to participate in a blog, wiki, online social network or any other form of online publishing or discussion is his/her own decision. Free speech protects educators who want to participate in social media, but the laws and courts have ruled schools can discipline teachers if their speech, including online postings, disrupts school operations.”*

Schoology Mid-Year Progress Report – Director of C&A Humanities, Jennifer Rabold, NES Teacher Blythe Purdin, CPS Teacher Rachel Sullivan

Jennifer Rabold offered an update on the rollout and progress of the Schoology LMS platform. The Department of Education mandated districts establish their choice of a Learning Management System once the pandemic hit. A LMS is a common platform for educators, students and families by streamlining daily management process’ by access to a central location that automates communication and assessment process, connects educational apps that can be accessed by links and opened directly. Schoology or Google Classroom were the options, and as Schoology was selected, Google classroom will phase out by August. Mrs. Rabold described Schoology as a social networking service for virtual learning in K-12 schools and higher education institutions that allow the users (teachers) to create, manage and share academic content. She reviewed

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what has worked well thus far and what has dragged and welcomed a few teachers who are part of the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) for Schoology. Blythe Purdin, Kindergarten Teacher in NES, offered a few snapshots of her classroom website and her list of learning objectives. The hub, as she described, is an interactive way to organize units/playlists, utilize apps, incorporate data on student usage/participation/remote attendance, grade, use collaborative tools to promote blended learning with videos or discussion boards and create a resource bank for templates and content. For teams of teachers this is helpful to collaborate, for families it is helpful to combine multiple children's information into one place. Jenn Rabold stated a LMS usually has a two-year rollout, but when COVID-19 took hold, districts were not afforded that time allotment. There was quick and dirty educator training with a 3-hour getting started self-paced course, then an introduction to blended learning at each school. There were 8 optional extra support sessions for individuals and small groups/departments last Fall and one advanced training which supported the 'early adopters'. There is continued support while everyone becomes more comfortable with the system and there will be more training over the Summer of 2021. Rachael Sullivan, Science Teacher in CPS, defined the Rollout Phase 1 which happened October 2020 and was primarily a time for teachers to set up their Schoology classrooms (virtual) and learn how to individualize their platforms. Phase II, December 2020, was focused on connecting with parents/families, ensuring students and parents were able to access their teacher pages. There were multiple learning sessions in both English and Spanish with continual drop-in sessions at each school. Phase III, targeted for September 2021, is full implementation with all classes in the district using Schoology with ease. Currently some teachers are still using Google classroom, but as that sunsets ending in August 2021, Google Suite can still be used with embeddable links in Schoology.

There is gradual acceptance from the teaching staff, with some more comfortable with the changeover than others, and the ILT at each school is helpful to motivate and help colleagues adapt to the new LMS. While many things have gone well with transitioning to Schoology, there are still some things to iron out. The time constraints of learning a new system, in an already challenging year has been stressful. Integrations with some third-party apps like Aspen are not yet seamless, but this will eventually assimilate and work together. For the youngest students, Schoology appears too text heavy, and there is effort to link Seesaw into Schoology for illustration-friendly apps. As the district familiarizes itself more and more with Schoology, and with continued support for implementation, professional development and parental drop-in tech support, the forecast is Schoology will be a successful endeavor. Jennifer Iller was positive about the one landing place for parents of students in multiple schools and finds it much easier to navigate. Mr. Sortevik asked what percentage of parents are making use of the platform, to which Mrs. Rabold said she could use the analytics to research that percentage. He also thought aloud it will be important to add Schoology to the School Committee District Goals. School Council Representative Amanda Mack shared she only has one class using Schoology, but that it seems a good way to organize all classes in all grades. Mrs. Rabold prompted there are substantial Schoology resources on the district website and promoted those resources for anyone seeking more information.

School Committee Goals Update

Mr. Steven Sortevik stated he was given short notice to update the Draft Goals but did his best to revise the status column and felt it necessary to add the following unassigned topics - Schoology, School Safety and Hybrid Progress. He illustrated his additions starting with: Goal #2, IV, 'advise of and assist parents in the use of Schoology in order to support students' academic progress.' Goal #2, V, 'ensure preparation, adoption and implementation of COVID safety protocols and procedures.' Goal #4, I, 'the district prepares, implements and adapts remote and hybrid learning curricula and schedules. Goal #4, II, 'appropriate technology hardware and software including for example, Schoology) are obtained and distributed as necessary to fully implement remote and related learning.' It is his hope these meet most of the needs and areas they have discussed, and he was open to suggestions, comments, edits, etc. He thought it important to establish a date to vote these Goals into adoption and put them up on the website, alluding that the ones available are now out of date. Mrs. Iller liked the additions. Mrs. Proch indicated the School Committee shall review them carefully, come forward for discussion and then the Goals will be placed on a future agenda for a vote.

Black History Month Presentation – Teachers Marita Scarlett, Leslieanne Brannigan, Eliza Koso, Lauren Murray, Jean Witt

Marita Scarlett, along with other members of the ILT, thanked the School Committee for the opportunity to share information and exhibitions happening throughout the district. A year ago, she had given a presentation at the African Meeting House and used the same introductory cover of pictures depicting various talented and important individuals who have contributed in meaningful ways to our history. Mrs. Scarlett said it was important to highlight individuals who are not necessarily the

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standard ones we have routinely learned about in our history books, and to discover those perhaps lesser known people who contributed in myriads of important ways to shape where we are today. She mentioned artists, athletes, authors, musicians. Lauren Murray, NES Teacher, spoke about the ways Black History has been incorporated into virtual and in-person teaching. Through read-alouds, integrated into ELA and Art lessons, in the School library, themes and lessons, and numerous discussions throughout team/grade levels, NES has been able to seamlessly add these important topics. She made the point that while February is recognized as Black History month, it is important to carry these lessons all year. Eliza Koso, NIS Teacher, shared pictures of activist projects and multimedia learning highlighting people in certain time periods and positions, and how those people have made a difference in so many areas. She emphasized the point that Black History is broader than just civil rights. Mrs. Scarlett showed the Black Lives Inspire mural at CPS and explained that this project is a school-wide mural with contributions from students, teachers, and staff. She added the importance of how this topic is not just about the struggle but the inspiration and importance of personal contributions. Leslianne Brannigan, NHS Teacher agreed it is important to celebrate some of the marginalized narratives of people contributing to the worlds of sports, politics, music and art and history of the Harlem Renaissance movement. She also shared how at the high school level there are more individual course offerings that focus on civil rights and historically significant time periods and teachers are addressing these topics in different areas. Mrs. Brannigan said some students are taking part in a Black History Month essay contest that spotlights civil rights leaders. In wrap up, Mrs. Scarlett said there is work being done district wide, including an ILT monthly newsletter, a shared Padlet with vast resources and collaborative discussions within buildings and among teams. Dr. Lepore appreciates celebrating an eclectic group such as Chuck Berry and Nelson Mandela and likes how it shows breadth. Mrs. Iller loves the collaboration and the visuals in the schools and appreciates how it is incorporated throughout the year, not just a month.

Black History Month Presentation – School Committee Member, Mrs. Zona Tanner-Butler

Mrs. Butler recently attended a Cape Cod Collaborative legislative breakfast and had done a presentation on Black History Month. She commented there is so much to chronicle and much heritage important to the shaping of American history that she felt compelled to offer a brief background to what, when, and how February became designated Black History Month. A half century after slavery was abolished, Historian Carter G. Woodson, the creator of what we presently know as Black History Month, worked to establish the event in an effort to provide an education on the origins, struggles, and achievements of African-Americans in United States history. Originally, in 1926, it was seven days of commemoration and called “Negro History Week.” It coincided with President Abraham Lincoln and Fredrick Douglas’ birthdays. In 1976 President Gerald Ford officially recognized February as the month. She offered more than a dozen empowering quotes from famous people and read specifically, “ Laundry is the only thing that should be separated by color.” Mrs. Butler also felt it important to note there are many different heritages celebrated per month and shared a listing from January through December. Miss Mack said she thought it was terrific to have these resources.

Committee discussion and votes to be taken

Vote to Approve Donation from Joseph L. Viera Fund to Whaler Football Program \$9,245.15 Steve Sortevik made a motion to approve the donation, Tim Lepore seconded, with no one opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve Donation from MassHire Cape & Islands Workforce Board to NHS School to Career, \$2,500.00 Steve Sortevik made a motion to approve the donation, Tim Lepore seconded, with no one opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve Donation from Cape Cod Five to Samantha Turcotte and Grade One for Educational Mini Grant for Sight Word Go Packs, \$500.00 Steve Sortevik made a motion to approve the donation, Tim Lepore seconded, with no one opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve February 2, 2021 Meeting Minutes Steve Sortevik made a motion to approve the minutes, Tim Lepore seconded, with no one opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve the Transfers & Invoices Steve Sortevik made a motion to approve, Tim Lepore seconded, the motion was approved.

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Sub-Committee/Work Group

Cape Cod Collaborative: Zona Butler stated the Legislative Breakfast was well attended with approximately 80 people and she experienced break out rooms in Zoom for the first time. She asked about out bussing situation which was a ‘hot’ topic at the breakfast. Superintendent Hallett responded she has met with Paul Hilton and Linda Barrett. New guidelines from DESE and less restrictions open our ridership and allow us to add more students and work with the waitlists. New studies show airflow and COVID transmission are not as risky as thought before and with windows open at two inches for airflow, we can add more students to the routes. With the vaccine offerings we can also welcome back a few additional drivers. She stated we are in “good shape.”

Pauline Proch commented how at the Legislative Breakfast, two students from Barnstable high school came to speak and presented a survey they created for high school students to find their voice in self-identification. She appreciated the students who came forth and talked about creating a safe spot for students to be able to participate in this way and will speak with the Superintendent and the high school principal about creating this opportunity at NPS.

NET: Pauline Proch happily declared Nantucket Education Trust is going strong. They have worked very hard to become a resource to provide support, and the board is finally at this stage. She thanked the NHS Guidance Department and Tracy Roberts, Director of Community School for the Across the Pond visits for sophomores and how this has been happening for the last few years. Now, with the pandemic, in person trips cannot happen so this year will be virtual and she hopes it will be engaging for students.

Jennifer Iller wanted to acknowledge the students who made Principal’s List for NHS and thanked Principal Vasil for recognizing them virtually. Steve Sortevik asked about these being made public, Principal Vasil said the achievement is listed in the Inquirer and Mirror.

Student Council Representative

Student Council Representative Amanda Mack shared the Scholarship list was made public. Veritas put out their 5th edition of the year, only recently having a printed edition for this year. She was excited to report Girls Hockey won their very first game ever, playing against Martha’s Vineyard.

Horizon

We are on target for next meeting March 2, 2021. Enrollment, School Committee Goals, School Committee Self Evaluation Documents, District Report Card and a possible K-12 Art Presentation.

At 8:20pm the School Committee adjourned on a motion made by Jennifer Iller, seconded by Steve Sortevik, and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Logan O’Connor, School Committee Clerk