

Nantucket School Committee
Meeting Minutes – Remote Participation via ZOOM and YouTube
March 2, 2021

Present Members: Chair Pauline Proch, Zona Tanner-Butler, Dr. Timothy Lepore, and Steve Sortevik. Also present from the Studio, NCTV Representative Mark Pommert and presenters as guests Superintendent Elizabeth Hallett, Director of Technology Jenn Erichsen, and Director of C&A Humanities Jennifer Rabold,

Members Not Present: Vice Chair Jennifer Iller and Student Representative Amanda Mack.

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; Director of C&A Humanities, Jennifer Rabold.

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 Tim Lepore, seconded by Steve Sortevik and was approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Comments from the Public

Rob Giacchetti thanked the school committee and school district in their efforts this year, noting that parents in the community understand the unusual situation this year has presented. As an advocate towards reopening in-person, he is pleased to see the progress made at the state level with a possible full reopening in April as well as expanded bussing options for students and hopes this is a step in the right direction for the district getting all students back in person. He noted the low numbers of cases in the community as a positive trend. He noted that many students are in school in person and athletics have been successful, suggesting that a return to in-person learning for all students and families that want it should be the next step, but also acknowledged that there are some families, students and teachers who may have issues returning to in-person learning and should be accommodated. He addressed the Nantucket Teachers Association and any teachers that were listening, encouraging them to consider what is best for the students and work towards creative solutions to get students back into school as soon as possible.

Superintendent’s Report

Enrollment

Superintendent Elizabeth Hallett shared that March enrollment was up by 12 students, from 1,638 in February to 1650 students in March. She believes that the increase can be attributed to families who are re-enrolling their students after

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returning from extended vacations. NES has the highest number of enrollments (9) while there were three (3) withdrawals at the high school.

Superintendent's Evaluation Tool

Dr. Hallett explained that the Superintendent's Evaluation Tool had been shared with School Committee members in anticipation of this meeting, but there was a newer 2019 version with many of the same components as the 2012 version that Dr. Hallett shared earlier that evening. She explained that there are four (4) standards: 1) Instructional Leadership; 2) Management and Operations; 3) Family and Community Engagement; and 4) Professional Culture. The school committee will review evidence provided from Dr. Hallett and the District Leadership Team addressing the standards and superintendent goals around the Entry Plan that will be presented later in the spring, and there will be a public evaluation process in late May or early June.

Mrs. Proch shared that she felt it to be important that the Committee use the 2019 version of the Superintendent's Evaluation Tool rather than the 2012 edition in order to move forward; she had attended a session at the MA Association of School Committees conference in November 2019 that provided an overview of the newer tool. Dr. Hallett assured the Committee that there were no drastic differences between the 2012 and 2019 versions. One additional document that Dr. Hallett shared around Focus Indicators which were specifically related to this unique pandemic year. Mrs. Proch then asked for confirmation that Dr. Hallett would collect information and feedback from the Administrative Team to share with School Committee as part of the Superintendent's Evaluation, which Dr. Hallett confirmed. She also explained that two School Committee members would be collecting the information and collating for the narrative, which would be presented to Dr. Hallett in advance of the public meeting.

MCAS Update

Dr. Hallett shared that everything is still tentative with MCAS, but DESE has shared testing windows: for Grades 3-8, MCAS ELA will take place between April 5 and May 7; Math will take place between April 26 and May 28; and Science, Technology and Engineering (STE) for Grades 5 and 8 only would be between April 27 and May 28. All tests will be given electronically and in person (in school). Tests will be shortened by 50% and MCAS scores will be used as diagnostics only and not counted towards district accountability ratings. High school will be taking ELA and Math MCAS between May 3 and June 4, with Science testing happening between June 1 and June 11. Unlike the MCAS assessments in Grades 3-8, the high school tests are not shortened and will be counted towards competency determination. 11th graders will take the "Legacy" MCAS while 10th graders will take the Next Generation MCAS. Dr. Hallett also explained that the Legislative Committee from the MA Association of School Superintendents (MASS) released talking points to be shared with the Board of Education and the Commissioner around why MCAS and ACCESS for ELLs should not be administered but district should be given the opportunity to use local formative and benchmark assessments rather than state mandated standardized tests; she would be glad to share these talking points with School Committee members.

Dr. Lepore shared that he felt it to be unfair to be moving ahead with testing in such a chaotic year; he would like to see the talking points that Dr. Hallett mentioned. Mr. Sortevik was surprised that the high school MCAS was so late in the school year (May). Mrs. Proch asked Dr. Hallett to confirm that seniors were able to gain competency determination through course completion rather than MCAS; Dr. Hallett confirmed that to be true. Mrs. Proch shared that she had been part of a conversation around the benefit of taking MCAS this year as a diagnostic, but we must still convey to students, teachers and parents in Grades 3 through 8 that MCAS is for information gathering only. Mrs. Tanner-Butler asked about college entrance exams and whether they had been continuing throughout the pandemic. Dr. Hallett confirmed that the exams had continued; the entry criteria for colleges or universities have slightly changed. High school principal Mandy Vasil shared that not all colleges are requesting SATs or ACTs for college entry at this time.

Summer Programs Update –Jennifer Rabold, Director of C&A Humanities

Dr. Rabold shared that NPS Summer Programs were still in the initial planning stages and that she was still learning about what the district had done in the past. There have traditionally been three summer programs that are run: Extended School Year (ESY) for Special Education run by Special Services Director Deb Gately, which allows for a continuation of IEP services over the summer; Title I, which provides extra support for struggling students that are eligible for Title I services; and Title III run by EL Director Kelly Cooney, which is around enrichment for English learners. For summer programs this year, NPS will be looking to accelerate progress rather than maintain progress due to the challenges of the pandemic. From

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a national study by NWEA (MAP), student achievement remained the same in reading but was lower in math. The lack of data over the last year is also a challenge. The tentative logistics for these programs would be 4 days per week for 5 weeks, 8:00 am to 12:00 pm with paid planning time and professional learning time for program teachers. The goal would be to have in-person instruction and outdoor learning opportunities. The criteria for eligibility (still under construction) are different for each program. For ESY, it must be part of the IEP service delivery grid so that students do not lose critical skills over the summer. For Title III, ACCESS scores and teacher recommendations will be used as entry criteria for the program. For Title I, classroom teacher recommendations, MAP scores in reading and math, Fountas & Pinnell scores, and possible history of regression or need for intervention will be reviewed for each student. Last year's numbers were as follows: 198 NES/NIS students and 50 CPS/NHS students in Title I and ESY; 71 students in Title III. It is possible that, based on the criteria, the numbers of eligible students could potentially double. Dr. Rabold shared that she met recently with program directors and facilitators from previous ESY/Title I and Title III summer programs and held a creative brainstorming meeting with teachers and administrators to reimagine summer programming for this year, review research on successful summer programs and develop a vision for a program full of rich experiences for eligible students. She shared a "Jamboard" slide that showed comments around what the participants of the brainstorming session would like to see in an ideal summer program at NPS with many helpful comments around engagement, hands-on learning, and balance between enrichment and academics. Based on this Jamboard activity, participants created a vision for what summer programs would include, such as equity and access for all students, meeting basic needs (food, transportation, social emotional support), common themes, community partnerships, and authentic learning experiences. For high school, some examples for what could be successful along with more traditional credit recovery courses included project-based activities with real world applications, and cross-school connections between lower and upper grades. Other programs (SAT prep, Financial Literacy, Algebra Boost) would also be considered. Dr. Rabold concluded the presentation with next steps, which included defining the model of teaching and learning, hiring, determining the budget, marketing the program, and building curriculum, offering food, among other items.

Mrs. Butler thanked Dr. Rabold for the presentation. Dr. Lepore commented that students should have the opportunity to stay back a grade if necessary, to make up for the losses, and the program should be expanded as much as possible. Mr. Sortevik concurred with Dr. Lepore with the idea of expanding the program beyond those who are traditionally invited to the program. Mrs. Proch echoed her colleagues; she wondered if volunteers (community members) could be included in assisting in these programs for math support or other academic areas. She asked about the students who hadn't been in school long enough take the MAP test; Dr. Rabold explained that there were challenges with the different cohorts and attendance, so there were some students who were not tested, and that this was a national trend across the country. NPS will be using additional data from other assessments and administering the MAP again in the spring to collect more data.

District Improvement Plan Mid-Year Update – Dr. Elizabeth Hallett, Superintendent

Dr. Hallett shared areas of progress, celebrations, and areas for further focus. She explained that we have moved forward in many areas in each of the Strategic Objectives. The Status column is color coded to show the status of each initiative (red for "Planned", orange for "Planned/In Process", yellow for "In Process", green for "Complete"). For Strategic Objective 1 (Improving Student Learning and Achievement), the district has been successful with implementing MAP assessments in grades K-9 as well as supporting blended learning in the hybrid educational model. The district is making solid progress with creating multi-tiered systems of support for all students at each school; Dr. Hallett feels that this is an area that will continue into the following year. With leveraging technology, the district has made considerable progress in learning new applications and educational platforms such as Schoology. For Strategic Objective 2 (Equity and Access), Dr. Hallett shared several initiatives that were "In Process" such as providing professional development on differentiation and the Universal Design for Learning model, implementing a universal screener for students experiencing trauma, providing more support for social and emotional learning during the school day, and establishing/reinforcing student behavioral expectations, especially around COVID-19 protocols. On a side note, Dr. Hallett shared that the ESSER-II federal funding requires that a portion of the funding be used for social and emotional support. For Strategic Objective 3 (Securing and Maximizing Resources), initiatives around budget were in excellent shape, with "Complete" or "In Process" status. Dr. Hallett mentioned recruitment of staff as one area still in the planning stage that will soon be implemented as the district begins to advertise and recruit for available positions. Initiatives around Facilities regarding the Capital Improvement and Campus-Wide Master Plans are also in process with substantial progress made, and Technology initiatives around supporting parents with all of the new technology their children have needed to use this year have also been moving forward. For Strategic Objective 4 (Championing a Culture of Communication and Collaboration) the district has been trying to prioritize parent partnerships

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and communication, which has been more challenging this year with the pandemic, but there has been progress in this initiative in that parent collaboration has been essential in having children succeed this year. Dr. Hallett also mentioned the initiative around building a stronger sense of community among district staff with stronger improvements in this challenging time and the importance of continuing to make an effort in celebrating the incredible work that has been done to move students and our district forward. She concluded that while there is still work to be done, the district should be pleased with the progress that has already been made; she also thanked the District Leadership Team for their participation in creating and implementing the plan.

The School Committee members thanked Dr. Hallett, acknowledging the incredible amount of important work that is underway with this Year Two Action Plan.

Committee discussion and votes to be taken

Vote to Approve 2020-21 School Committee Goals Tim Lepore made a motion to approve the goals, Zona Butler seconded, with no one opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve 2021-22 School Calendar Steve Sortevik made a motion to approve the calendar, Zona Butler seconded, with no one opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve February 18, 2021 Meeting Minutes (with typo change) Tim Lepore made a motion to approve the minutes, Zona Butler seconded, with no one opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve the Transfers & Invoices Steve Sortevik made a motion to approve, Zona Butler seconded, with no one opposed, the motion was approved.

Sub-Committee/Work Group

Non reported.

Student Council Representative

Non reported, as Student Council Representative Amanda Mack was not present.

Horizon

We are on target for next meeting March 18, 2021 at 6:30 pm. Friends of NPS, Student Support Services Update, School Committee Self Evaluation, District Report Card, and COVID Vaccine Updates.

At 7:10 pm, the School Committee adjourned on a motion made by Steve Sortevik, seconded by Tim Lepore, and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Hallett, Superintendent