

**Nantucket School Committee  
Public Forum (Emergency) Meeting Minutes  
September 28, 2020**

Present Members: School Committee Members: Jennifer Iller, Zona Butler, Pauline Proch, Steve Sortevik, Superintendent Elizabeth Hallett, Department of Health Director, Roberto Santamaria, Select Board Chair Dawn Holdgate, Nantucket Cottage Hospital Gary Shaw, Dr. Diane Pearl, Dr. Michael McNab, NTA Representatives Page Martineau & Alice Crowley, NPS District Leadership Team

The Public Forum gathering was called to order by Chair Pauline Proch at 6:00pm, meeting held remotely, via Zoom. Chair Proch read the protocols of the Zoom Webinar, inviting everyone interested to make Public Comment or ask questions to enter this Forum as an Attendee with prospective name and email. Attendees would be recognized in the order they enter and public comment would be read into the record. Chair Proch offered Dr. Elizabeth Hallett the opportunity to welcome everyone. Dr. Hallett encouraged everyone to be heard and thanked the Panelist experts for gathering on such short notice.

Over 545 community members were watching via Youtube and more than 100 community members joined this Forum as Attendees. The questions and comments were broad to specific, ranging from: dates when children can return to school, numbers of children who can return, medical information or clarification, metrics data, directions or mandates from the Governor and/or the Commissioner, health and safety protocols, specifics about Cohorts, testing information, census information, etc... Many parents expressed concern about children needing (missing) personal connections with their teachers and peers. Some are worried about the possibilities of starting and stopping in and out of school, some discussed “living” with the reality of COVID, some asked about the testing capabilities and how that drives our case numbers. Some school staff asked about Town not being open to the public fully, emphasizing smaller group gatherings, and stated classes sizes can be 15-18 or more at a time, therefore making teachers’ unique in their possible exposure. Other school staff noted our being in the red zone and districts with this designation have been directed not to be in school. There were other staff who communicated they are nervous because of the recent spikes in case numbers and feel safety protocols are not complete. Some wanted to know about contact tracing and the efficiency to successfully isolate a case(s). NTA Co-President Page Martineau suggested a phased in reopening with Cohort A to allow for a ‘practice run’ to help iron out any issues and alleviate concerns.

Dr. Hallett introduced NPS COVID Liaison, Sara Brooks, RN. Mrs. Brooks talked briefly about her current role at NPS and how she will help navigate and monitor the health and well-being of the school community. She will support in directing testing needs, following DESE guidelines, and assisting families and advocate for a streamlined connection between NPS and NCH. She briefly reviewed what will happen if someone in the school community presents a COVID possible situation and the timeline of cleaning classrooms, quarantining, and return to school.

Dr. Hallett and Principals of each school emphasized the 6ft distance of desks in all classrooms and talked about school space for classrooms and class number sizes. They have listened to teachers, staff, and students in creating the ‘new normal’ for the Hybrid Plan. Student Support Services (Social workers, Guidance, Special Services staff) are also very attune to the students and staff and are working to ensure everyone’s social emotional well-being and comfort levels are being addressed. Science driven data has helped to shape the plans moving forward and collaboration with everyone is the key to success. Dr. Hallett also reminded the public the recent decisions for returning to school have been made with the utmost care and collaboration of the School Committee, the District Leadership Team, the NTA, DPH, the Town. Everyone has agreed we should move forward.

All experts responded to each and every question. Some general takeaways:

- COVID is here to stay – we must learn to live with COVID
- We expect cases, more data = more known cases, but our risk factors are low
- Masks work, hand washing and social distancing works
- We are aggressively testing, we know more about the virus now, with better understanding of test results, test findings, symptoms
- National Education Association ranked Massachusetts #1 in Hybrid plans

**Nantucket School Committee**  
**Workshop Meeting Minutes**  
**September 28, 2020**

- Our red zone designation must be closely examined using various data, not just the straight number of cases to population
- News sources must come from DPH and NCH, not social media platforms

In wrapping up the forum, Dr. Hallett was happy to take any unanswered questions via email. She felt tonight's discussion was very positive and was confident everyone can work together to move forward. Chair Pauline Proch agreed this was a great discussion, thanking everyone in attendance and NCTV for being available to assist with this Public Forum. At 8:46pm, Forum adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Logan O'Connor, School Committee Clerk