

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

Present Members: Chair Pauline Proch, Vice Chair Jennifer Iller, Secretary Steve Sortevik, and Zona Tanner Butler. Also present from the Studio, NCTV Representative Matt Pommerfret and presenters as guests: Superintendent Elizabeth Hallett, NPS Finance Director Martin Anguelov, Friends of Nantucket President, Elizabeth Sullivan, FONPS School Representative Tracy Mailloux, Special Education Director Debra Gately, Team Chair Michelle Cadavid, School Psychologist Sara Holton-Roth, Guidance Counselors Lisa Hood (NES), Jacklyn Normand (CPS), Courtney Foster (NHS), Director of ELL, Kelly Cooney, ILT Members Marita Scarlett (CPS), Leslie Brannigan (NHS), Rebecca Cressy (CPS), Eliza Koso (NIS), Lauren Murray (NES), Nicole Ridge (NES), Morgan Smith Jones (NIS), and Jean Witt (CPS). This 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, Zona Butler, 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

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 at 6:00pm. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Steve Sortevik, seconded by Jennifer Iller, which was then approved unanimously by roll call vote. Mrs. Proch welcomed everyone to the Nantucket School Committee meeting and opened Public Comment.

Comments from the Public

None

Superintendent’s Report

Commissioners Return to School Proclamation

Dr. Elizabeth Hallett reported on Commissioner Riley’s *Return to School* decree – a 100% return to in-person learning, phased in for grades Prek-5 to start April 5, grades 6-8 to start April 28 and a date to be announced for high school age students. Parents will be able to choose 100% in person or 100% remote, understanding the choice can possibly impact schedules and/or having different teachers. At this point, as we are better equipped with knowledge of the COVID-19 virus, masks will remain standard wear, but we can utilize square footage and place more students in classrooms while still adhering to safety protocols that will continue to support a safe environment as always. She assumed that next year too, as we move hopefully to our regular five days per week schedule at the very start of the academic year, we will most likely still be wearing masks. Dr. Hallett was pleased to share that while a stand-alone clinic for school staff vaccinations did not gain a foothold from the state at this time, with Phase II, Stage 3 fully implemented, staff has begun to be vaccinated without the

Nantucket School Committee
Meeting Minutes -Remote Participation via ZOOM and Youtube
March 18, 2021

clinic. To date, 300 Nantucket educators have received their first dose, some even the second; she feels this is helping to boost morale and assuage fears as we move from hybrid to all in person.

Dr. Hallett stated surveys have been sent to staff to aide in determining schedules as well as to parents/guardians for their thoughts on which model of learning they might choose. The Elementary school has already assessed from this data, 341 students wish to return to all in person model with 25 students remaining in a remote learning setting and 3 students in an undecided category. The other schools are still collecting their data to determine preferences of learning models. The District Leadership Team has been working together to determine time on learning, student schedules, quarantining protocols, lunch issues, and other important areas. The state has established time on learning requirements as 5 hours per day on average in a week for Elementary students and 5.5 hours on average per day for middle and high school students. Keeping Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday as full days, with Wednesday as a half day seems to be aiding in minimal mixing of students/pods and offering some continuity. Lunch is providing some challenges within the new full in person plan due to the need of keeping the 6ft distance with masks off; the DLT is trying to think creatively, utilizing overflow areas, the cafeterias (currently not being used), outdoor lunch on good weather days, as well as finding lunch monitors/adult supervision. Each school is developing its own plan and each plan can change dependent on distancing, class sizes and room sizes. One thing remains, teachers will continue at 6ft from their students. With this news from Commissioner Riley's office, Dr. Hallett said she is working with the Joint Labor Management Council with NTA to finalize plans to move forward. She will provide a Return to School Instructional Plan on April 1.

Zona Butler had a question about continuing to sanitize between classes, Dr. Hallett answered how the older students basically do this themselves and the younger students have help from teachers and TAs. Steve Sortevik asked if the return to school dates from the Commissioner's office can be pushed back based on the proposed legislation in the pipeline. Dr. Hallett believes these dates are hinged on the MCAS testing that will indeed take place and the Commissioner does not have authority to cancel MCAS as it comes from the federal level. To receive a waiver for the standardized testing, Massachusetts would have had to apply for the waiver, but waivers are not being offered, therefore, the option is moot. Jennifer Iller expressed worry concerning the need to accommodate high risk students or those with pre-existing conditions and to be sensitive to families who are concerned about the return to in person. Pauline Proch picked up on this point and stressed being sensitive about the anxiety of students and staff struggling with coming back into school. Dr. Hallett agreed this presents challenges, but we are doing the best possible work to build a robust plan and to provide people the chance to voice any concerns. She furthered the Principals and Guidance departments are aware.

Presentations and discussions of interest to the Committee

Friends of Nantucket Public Schools – President Elizabeth Sullivan & Board Member Tracy Mailloux

Mrs. Sullivan thanked the School Committee for having her to present and agreed the pandemic has created a different kind of year. Attendance for FONPS (even though remote) has been good and there are a few new members. Mrs. Sullivan reminded everyone that FONPS meetings are open to the public, and she invited anyone to attend and possibly consider joining. FONPS, as a PTA, exists to support the district and last year they offered some 'non' fundraiser fundraisers due to COVID-19. This generated \$4,000 for which they are thankful, but because their two major fundraisers in the summer and winter did not take place, they are trying to come up with some out-of-the-box ways to raise money. She described one in the works for April, a virtual trivia night. FONPS is continuing to offer spirit wear, which is a big grab for younger students and families, and she thanked the Nantucket Golf Club for their continued support. While there are a few different grant and scholarship opportunities through the FONPS group, the Staff Initiated Funding (SIF) benefits solely from the Golf Club. Mrs. Sullivan said the silver lining of not having a lot of events was because there was not a lot of spending. Mrs. Mailloux reiterated the SIF money is available and urged all schools to pay attention to these coffers. She described some 7th and 8th grade virtual classroom opportunities that were made available to students and some high school art support. She also talked about a virtual enrichment presentation geared for parent education which broached the topic of social emotional health, and had approximately 70 attendees, which was considered well attended. Finally, Mrs. Mailloux shared that while the Children's Fund has been inactive this year, as things start to reopen, she is confident they will see increased applications as this fund is a well utilized line. The School Committee thanked the FONPS and remarked how invaluable they are to the district. Mr. Sortevik commented he has worked in a half dozen districts and never seen any other group like the FONPS.

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

Student Support Services Update – Debra Gately, Director of Special Education Services & Staff Student Service Team Members: School Counselors Jeanne Clark and Lisa Hood (NES), Rachel Foulkes and Aaron Peckham (NIS), Dauna Coffin and Jacklyn Normand (CPS), Yuliya Chumak, Courtney Foster and Christopher Miemiec (NHS); School Social Workers: Holly McGill, Emily Sybert, Rebecca Cressy, and Julie Kingston; School Psychologists: Michelle Cadavid, Jennifer Laredo and Sarah Holton Roth

Ms. Gately delivered an extensive presentation, starting with the school counseling program, which consists of school guidance curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services, system support, new student welcome program and writing and maintain student 504 plans. She broke down each category, offering specific examples of what is provided, such as structured lessons for all age students, skills as age appropriate for developmental levels, and college and career readiness at the upper level. Small group and individual counseling, student observations and ‘check-ins’, parent/teacher conferences, and student success plans all tell the story of how the guidance counselors “know their kids.” When referrals are necessary, the outside agencies and providers are available and extensive: Fairwinds, Gosnold, DCF, Family Planning, Family Doctors, A Safe Place, Mobile Crisis and Juvenile Courts. While this year much of the contact has been remote or virtual telehealth visits there are occasions for live connections.

Ms. Gately discussed support systems in place within the district and how staff have weekly SST/MTSS meetings to address any student concerns (academic, social, emotional, behavioural). Guidance and healthy choice education continue in all grade levels, staff routinely partakes in professional development and trainings and she feels strongly that the practices in place are working well. Even despite the pandemic and how that has changed some of the routine systems due to little in person connections she is confident of the methods in place. Ms. Gately discussed (and offered an informational video) the new, fully implemented DESSA Screener for grades K-8 which is a social emotional screening tool adopted this year at NES, NIS & CPS. This tool is a strength-based, nationally standardized, valid, and reliable tool for screening and progress monitoring of social-emotional competence. Due to the pandemic, it is Ms. Gately’s opinion the need has significantly increased to identify students’ well-being. DESSA provides both a mini screener, a quick diagnostic, and a full, more in-depth screener.

Ms. Gately focused next on the school psychology programs throughout the district now equipped with three full time psychologists. She listed a multitude of programming: positive behavior and mental health, improving academic achievement, strengthening family school partnerships, supporting diverse learners and culturally responsive services, conducting psychological and academic assessments, and collaborating with all schools and the faculty and community. She discussed some successes and challenges and how this pandemic year has impacted both.

Wrapping up the presentation, Ms. Gately talked about the next steps for the Student Support Services Team and how preparation for welcoming back students largely to in person over the next 4-8 weeks will be the focus. She also referenced keeping in close contact with the students who continue to participate remotely. Preparing students for the effective transitions to the next grade level will be an area for all, especially continuing the work with individuals and groups of students. Finally, providing SEL Professional Development for faculty and student wellness assemblies through a new partnership in the Massachusetts Partnership for Youth is another goal. She opened for questions, and Mrs. Butler was curious about the ability for in person or remote meetings with students and can you effectively evaluate students. She is especially concerned about the observations of students remotely and meaningful connections needing to be made. Michelle Cadavid, Team Chair/Psychologist, and Sarah Holton Roth, Psychologist, answered that testing for cognitive, social emotional development and more, is done in person (preferred method), even during this time. In person is favored to achieve a solid result of assessment. Jennifer Iller said with such significant increase of services needed, she wants to support students and faculty by adding more student support staff, meaning full-time personnel. Mr. Sortevik agreed with Mrs. Iller’s budgetary suggestions and applauds and appreciates the breadth of what the whole group is doing for the district. Mrs. Proch was curious of the percentage of college applicants, citing 61% this year and was that comparable to last year. Guidance Counselor Yuliya Chumak offered last year was 63% and the year prior was 64%; she felt solid about this year, as it was a close percentage. Mrs. Proch also asked about the mindfulness programming and wondered if this continues in remote learning. Rebecca Cressy responded it is more one-on-one this year and less group work. Jacklyn Normand offered the general education classes are indeed using this curriculum, and Lisa Hood commented the children use Mind Yeti in NES where it is embedded into small group sessions, and they are very receptive to the practice. In closing, Chair Proch asked about incorporating mindfulness into professional development moving forward, and Ms. Gately assured her this already exists, and the staff has had an exceptional amount of PD in this area.

Nantucket School Committee
Meeting Minutes -Remote Participation via ZOOM and Youtube
March 18, 2021

Antiracism Instructional Leadership Team Presentation – Director of EL Kelly Cooney, Director of SPED Debra Gately, Marita Scarlett (CPS), Leslieanne Brannigan (NHS) Rebecca Cressy (CPS) Eliza Koso (NIS) Lauren Murray (NES) Nicole Ridge (NES), Morgan Smith Jones (NIS), Jean Witt (CPS)

Supported by Kelly Cooney and Debra Gately, the ILT had a comprehensive presentation to offer the school committee. Ms. Cooney began by reviewing the topics for the ILT group and the alignment of this initiative to the District Improvement Plan, specifically Strategic Initiative II which states: Increase Support, Equity, and Access for All students by providing culturally relevant, equitable, safe, and supportive learning environments which will broaden all students' social/emotional resiliency. She expanded to provide details about the Tiered Focus Monitoring and Civil Rights focus on subgroups, which looks at translations, MCAS, Special Services students, and disproportionality along with classroom observations and narratives from both students and staff all as points to reference when creating a district that supports this curriculum. Ms. Cooney stated that she has been asking for this focus for years and thanked Dr. Hallett and Martin Anguelov, Director of Finance, for support in this approach to promote culturally responsive, anti-racist teaching and practices. Deb Gately reminded the School Committee of our cycle of the Tiered Focus Monitoring (formerly Coordinated Program Review, or CPR) and that we are in the self-assessment stage after the district has been monitored over the last three years. There are two categories showing disproportionality and where we are not doing a 'good job' due to overidentifying struggling African Americans and Latino students as needing special education services. Ms. Gately shared the district is developing an action plan to address these areas and will have support funding of 15% from the IDEA Grant and that it is important to understand the root causes.

Marita Scarlett voiced this group is asking people to take risks in learning and teaching. Ms. Scarlett referenced the heinous recent reporting of the Asian American attacks and asked for a moment of silence to reflect on this current travesty, and those from the past year. Eliza Koso read to everyone the groups Mission Statement:

We are a team of educators dedicated to supporting student-centered anti-racist work by amplifying student and staff voices to School Committee members, administrators, staff and students across NPS through the modeling of tolerance, awareness and equity. We will share resources, make suggestions to develop and modify curriculum, moderate conversations with fellow staff members about the importance of and development of anti- practices, and analyze school processes and procedures that need to be made more equitable and inclusive.

Each member of the team offered their perspective: Leslieanne Brannigan talked about current projects such as the NHS Student Coalition, newsletters for staff and families, presenting about unconscious bias in the classroom completion of the Decolonizing the Curriculum course and researching how other district have addressed racism and what is working outside Nantucket. Jean Witt talked about how racism plays out in schools and the research showing overrepresentation of students of color in SPED, lower achievements for students of color on standardized tests, lower percentage of students of color in advanced coursework, and what NPS is doing to mitigate these findings. Nicole Ridge talked about future projects and analysis of process and procedures - diving into the subgroups to find who is in College Prep, Honors and AP, what are the discipline referral rates, how is the ISLE program working for students of color or who have disabilities, developing culturally competent counseling, reviewing Universal PreK and exploring the Dual Language Program. Morgan Smith Jones quoted "what does this mean going forward" and offered the ILT's recommendations: Collect data from students both past and present; continue to fund anti-racism initiative professional development to close achievement gaps; revise curriculum and focus on culturally relevant pedagogy; develop partnership with community organizations; focus on hiring and retention procedures.

Mrs. Butler took an opportunity to share a concern of hers about understanding racism. She stated she wants the group and district to be careful "how far they take this" as it is her opinion that everyone needs to learn, and race should not cloud the teaching and learning. She is worried about slotting people into categories because access to education is equal. She offered an extensive oration and thanked the ILT group for all their work. Mrs. Iller appreciated and agreed that everyone should be treated equally, and understanding the goal of the group, also cautioned to be careful of a fine line. Mr. Sortevik added the shortfalls are depressing, but feels we are progressing and thanked the group for all they are doing. Miss Mack added she thinks it is good to have these conversations and to have resources to go home with families. Mrs. Proch rounded out that there are significant times and moments in history that have not been talked about and gave an example between the UK and USA education. She also described her thoughts on a teachable moment from past Egan Maritime classrooms where the students are asked what a scientist looks like and the majority draw white males with glasses. She applauded the unraveling of this topic and appreciates the opportunities to have conversations to encourage more equality.

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

End of the Year Financial Report – Director of Finance Martin Anguelov.

Mr. Anguelov offered the End of Year Report June 30, 2020, based on applying agreed upon procedures over compliance applicable to Massachusetts School Districts. Overseen by Roselli, Clark & Associates, CPAs, this information is a town wide reporting and for the school department, includes financial information on operating budget, gifts, revolvers, and other areas. After three years of clean audits, there was one finding this year in General Compliance citing our MUNIS accounting system which apparently does not represent costs reported in the object codes as required by the Department of Education. While NPS, under TON, has used MUNIS accounting software for over twenty years, this is the first time DESE has made this finding. Mr. Anguelov is displeased with this because it is not an area he can control, but he understands the writ and gave some historic information to support why this finding may have surfaced. He explained in 2012 the previous Finance Director, Glenn Field, was working with an outside consultant to rectify this change in MUNIS reporting. The work process was extensive and became cumbersome with ultimately, the TON scratching the project. Nantucket is not the only district wrestling with this finding and one of the accountants shared with Mr. Anguelov, making this point might assist in districts moving to a system that will be approved by DESE. Mr. Anguelov agrees that, while arduous in process, the long-term result of this change in the accounting system will make the end of year reporting easier and more importantly, compliant. Mr. Sortevik was concerned we could be faced with two reporting systems, but Mr. Anguelov responded the Chart of Accounts is always a topic of conversation with his MASBO colleagues, and this pressure to convert will force compliance.

At this late hour (8:38) of the School Committee meeting, there was one presentation left to review, the School Committee Self Evaluation, and the Chair asked the committee their thoughts on pushing this to the next agenda, April 1. She reviewed the Horizon, Dr. Hallett agreed it could be added, the School Committee Clerk so noted, and everyone agreed.

Committee discussion and votes to be taken

Vote to Approve Donation from ProStart to NHS Culinary, for remote students, Misc Kitchen items Steve Sortevik made a motion to approve the donation, Jennifer Iller seconded, with no one opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve March 2, 2021 Meeting Minutes Zona Butler made a motion to approve the minutes, Steve Sortevik 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, the motion was approved.

Sub-Committee/Work Group

NET: Pauline Proch said they met and are pleased with the recent Across the Sound program, an update which will come from Tracey Roberts regarding NHS students remotely visiting colleges

Steve Sortevik made a ‘shout-out’ to Veritas for reporting and specifically regarding the unsung heroes article about Teaching Assistants. Zona Butler complimented the three NHS swimmer names to All Scholastic Team for the past Winter season. Pauline Proch along with Marita Scarlett shared the Nantucket Project Winter Edition is preparing a free presentation webinar on March 25, topic is Resiliency, as well as the Nantucket Atheneum’s Movies with Moe. Also not to forget, One Book One Island is about to start.

Student Council – Representative Amanda Mack

Miss Mack shared the Student Council is brainstorming ideas for events for Spring, trying to find fun safe ways for students to celebrate and generate spirit especially leading up to the Island Cup. The Senior Class is selling sweatshirts to raise money for their class and please see Mrs. Hickman for more information.

The next meeting will be April 1, 2021 at 6:30 pm

At 8:47pm the School Committee adjourned on a motion made by Steve Sortevik, seconded by Zona Butler and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Logan O’Connor, School Committee Clerk