

Nantucket School Committee
Meeting Minutes – Remote Participation via ZOOM and YouTube
June 1, 2021

Present Members: Chair Pauline Proch, Vice Chair Jennifer Iller, Secretary Steve Sortevik, and Dr. Tim Lepore. Also present from the Studio, NCTV Representative John Carl McGrady and presenters as guests: Tracy Roberts, Director of Community School, Debra Gately, Director of Special Services. 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 6:04pm. A motion was made to approve the agenda by Tim Lepore, seconded by Steve Sortevik, and 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

Superintendent Entry Plan Timeline

Superintendent Elizabeth Hallett discussed her report regarding the findings of her Entry Plan as a first year Superintendent with Nantucket Public Schools. This statement will encompass data as excerpts of discussions, interviews and overall takeaways that she is compiling for presentation. Her coach of NISP (New Superintendent Induction Program) Matt King, suggested moving this presentation forward to July, recommending taking the time to be thorough. COVID created an unprecedented year of challenges for any seasoned Superintendent, let alone being brand new. Dr. Hallett is reporting this time change to make sure the School Committee is aware of the timeline alteration.

Hiring

Dr. Hallett stated there are 24 teacher positions to fill for next year, with 11 completed thus far and 6 teaching assistant positions needed, with 3 filled. She shared 3 ESP positions are open, with 2 filled already. She said the good news is that typically hard to fill positions like the IDSC have been successfully hired. She also announced the Director of ELL has been hired, Mrs. Patricia Aube, and the Director of Athletics position will have Mr. Travis Lombardi at the helm. Both positions are effective July 1.

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MCAS

Schools are almost finished with testing. All has gone fairly smoothly, although 10th grade testing was a longer exam, and it appears the students were seemingly fatigued with the testing times. Dr. Hallett said she will present a more detailed report on June 15.

Presentations and discussions of interest to the Committee

Nantucket Community School Update with TON – Reduction of Subsidy by \$50,000 – Director of NCS, Tracy Roberts
Director of Nantucket Community School, Tracy Roberts explained a technical amendment being made to the Appropriation on Article 8 at Annual Town Meeting. She did not want the School Committee to be surprised of this change of \$550,000 moving to \$500,000. This is a result of a reduction of \$50,000 attributable to staffing changes/reductions and this change will impact our MOU with the TON. The Community School will therefore not be moving forward with renewal of the MOU and the care of the fields involved in this agreement will shift back to the TON. Programming will still be in effect, but the onus of field maintenance will revert to the Town. Jennifer Iller asked about the conversations with TON to have the Community School become part of them and not remain under the umbrella of the school. Mrs. Roberts answered for now that remains static with no current changes and NCS remains connected to NPS.

Special Education Update/School Counselor Presentation - Director of Special Services, Debra Gately

Ms. Gately remarked the year has been busy and this presentation is an Addendum to her earlier presentation of March 18. She began there are 320 students who have qualified for an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) which includes nine students placed in Out of District Residential Programs (seven current and two awaiting placement) and six students from the New School and Lighthouse School. This represents an increase of 29 students for this year. 16% of students are qualified for Special Education compared to the state average of 18.7%. Ms. Gately gave the breakdown per the four schools of students who received services and stated IEP meetings have been held in person since January 2021 and remotely throughout the year according to parent preference. She feels remote has been very helpful to facilitate meetings. She furthered broke down these numbers by disability category and focused on a high number at NES for students with Developmental Delays (50 students) but also pointed out that students cannot qualify until the age of 8 so the number is a collective total. Ms. Gately next outlined the 504 plans which address immediate health needs and are overseen by the School Counselors. These plans are developed by the principal, and currently there are 7 in NES, 26 in NIS, 30 in CPS and 38 in NHS.

In September 2020, when in person learning resumed in hybrid form, high needs students were invited to be part of Cohort A and returned to school four days a week. Some families opted to have their students remain at home and those students with IEPs received services remotely. The Team Chairs helped special education liaisons in coordinating past-due assessments and quickly started to resurrect overdue IEP annual review and three-year re-evaluation meetings. It should be noted many parents opted out from meetings in March 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic hit hard. With concern of regression, meetings for these students were required to be held by the end of the year in December 2020. Compensatory services have been extended to all who qualify and as of May 14, 2021, six students have qualified as determined by a TEAM composed of parents, teachers, and administrators. A discretionary Federal Special Education Grant awarded in January will fund the compensation for tutors.

Ms. Gately outlined the department initiatives for 2020-2021:

- Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Study Groups
- Targeted focus on MTSS and Response to Intervention processes
- BCBA Program Site Visit, Review and Ongoing Consultation – a team from Boston is providing ongoing services which have proved very beneficial.
- Addressing DESE finding of Significant Disproportionality – NPS was found to be significantly disproportionate in the areas of disability identification and placement of African American/Blank Students, seven with intellectual disabilities and Hispanic or Latino students, twenty-one with Communication disabilities. This is based on a three year analysis of data. We are responding with identifying root causes, reviewing district policies, practices and procedures developing and submitting an action plan and enacting the plan for the next school year
- Completion of a Tiered Focused Monitoring self-assessment
- Adoption of Social Thinking Curriculum for sub separate program students as a companion to SEL
- Addition of the second IDSC teacher at NIS (which has been filled)
- Creation of the LBLD Program at NIS with a new teacher position (also filled)

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- Addition of a Spanish speaking interpreter/translator assigned to the SPED office
- Adoption of Foundations program for ELL students at NES
- Adoption of the SEL curriculum for grades 6-12 (in process)

Ms. Gately next offered the updates from Student Support Services beginning with the Nantucket Elementary & Intermediate Schools both welcoming students back in person on April 5th. The Counselors and Social Workers reviewed their focus of skills for social and academic success, bullying prevention units, updates for MTSS and IEP meetings, conducted DESSA PD for staff to help understand the results and identify next steps, provided Tier 1 and 2 support in small groups, supported students at Tier 3 levels, continued playlists for social emotional learning lessons, offered a survey to teachers to see what they need, and supported students through the transitions from remote to blended learning to in person school. CPS welcomed students back on April 28 – Counselors and Social Workers also supported students through the transitions, guided 8th graders through registration for NHS, analyzed DESSA results to determine level of need and skills to teach, continued small group and individual counseling, continued 504s, participation in weekly student support grade level team meetings, honored mental health awareness month, supported 20 students at the Tier 3 level, participation in SEL study groups, participation in NPS behavioral health group monthly meetings, and overall class support in the OPTIONS, IDSC and Gen Ed classes. In NHS, students returned to school on May 5. Seniors were delivered the Signs of Suicide Program with Fairwinds assistance and Freshman will get it delivered by the end of the year, the counselors and social worker provided teacher panels for college discussion, a second Junior seminar outlining a to do list for the college process, drafted and distributed students' schedules for next year, helped with the AP exam proctoring and MCAS proctoring as well as continuing their typical case load.

At the conclusion of her presentation, Ms. Gately thanked and recognized Mrs. Rebecca Earle for her 19 years of service to the Special Services Department and “support, care and commitment to the students, families and staff of NPS...” Mrs. Earle is moving off island she will be missed dearly stated Ms. Gately.

Mr. Sortevik asked about regression, concerned that students missed a lot of academics, and asked how only six students ended up receiving services, as he feels this is inconsistent. Ms. Gately responded it is a formula that bases decisions on student data, access to curriculum, comprehension, were the students losing skills and how the combination of factors along with parents' decisions provide the guidance. Mrs. Proch was curious about the chart showing the breakdown of services and that it appears to increase as students get to the older schools. Ms. Gately explained how special instruction in curriculum is modified for delivery and fine-tuned as students' progress. Effective change is a span of 3-4 years, but the levels are better dissected with data for students K-5. Mrs. Proch also wanted to know if the school is providing outreach for new families. Ms. Gately said the process is in place, but it needs and shows signs of improvement with SNAC branching out and Mandy Vasil, NHS Principal sharing resources. She agreed however, more Public Relations is needed and having an Interpreter will help in this area. Being back in school full time also helps facilitate these types of conversations. Finally, Mrs. Proch asked for the demographic breakdown of students, always preferring to see this sub-set information.

Civics Project

Jennifer Rabold, Humanities Curriculum & Assessment Director shared in 2018 the Board of Education adopted new frameworks to expand the Civics Education. The focus grades are 8th grade and high school US History curriculum. A student led project is the expectation and for this year it falls in the 4th quarter. The instructional outline is for identification of an Informed Action for Social Political Change, identify the issues, speak to leaders in the community create a PSA and take action with the issue. In NHS, this is the first year for this pilot program project and it sounds very intriguing to see it unfold. Dr. Lepore asked if teachers are suggesting the topics, with Dr. Rabold answering the students should take the lead with student choice, and hoping the choices are engaging. Mrs. Proch asked about a public presentation with Dr. Rabold and Mrs. Vasil, NHS Principal, agreeing they are working on that very outlet, including a possible display somewhere in the community.

Technology Annual Report _Director of Technology, Jennifer Erichsen

This is the Annual Report by Mrs. Erichsen beginning by introducing the Technology Team: Joanne Johnsen, Database Administrator, Jamie McCoy, Jason Campisi, Marina Bencheva, Jaime Saravia. She reviewed the accomplishments for the district this year, which she emphasized has been a “wild ride” due to the pandemic:

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- COVID – 19 rollout of devices to all students
- Replace Windows laptops for all teachers
- Install docks in all classrooms for easier mobility
- Schoology procurement
- Online Tech Support for all schools
- getHelp ticketing
- eRate upgrade
- Cybersecurity and Social Media
- Big Data
- Managed Methods

She further described by school, specific accomplishments that impacted each school individually. She broke down the devices purchased from FY17 through FY21 outlining a surge in laptops and iPads for this year due to the pandemic. The Technology department offered a lot of Professional Development for staff: Seesaw, Mosyle (which manage iPads), Google, Azure, TipWebIT, Master Class, Limewize, Newline Panels, Cybersecurity . The Technology department provided a number of administrative functions including: Aspen Student Information Systems, Data Collection and Reporting to DESE, Big Data and DataHub, and SIMS/EPIMS/SCS. Mrs. Erichsen shared about tracking the devices given to students and families to support the remote and hybrid learning, and she explained how she is encouraging families to keep devices the school has provided if that is the families' only device. In looking forward to the next school year, Mrs. Erichsen will still be handling the ramifications of COVID and Equity access for all. She will continue the 1:1 program, will maintain inventory lifecycle, and will dial in on eRate Network Upgrades. The School Committee did not have specific questions but praised Mrs. Erichsen and her team citing the job they have done during this unprecedented time has been 'amazing' and they are thrilled with how they have gotten everyone 'up to speed'. Mrs. Proch also wanted to commend the Nantechies program, newly implemented last year and she feels the program is so beneficial for the school but also the students who are the Nantechies.

Committee discussion and votes to be taken

Vote to Approve Teaching Assistant Collective Bargaining Agreement 2021-2023 Steve Sortevik made a motion to approve, Jennifer Iller seconded, with none opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve Donation of Craftsman Air Compressor from W. Michael Cozort to NIS, \$150.00 Steve Sortevik made a motion to approve, Jennifer Iller seconded, with none opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve Donation from Stop & Shop Community Bag Program to CPS, \$176.00 Jennifer Iller made a motion to approve, Tim Lepore seconded, with none opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve Donation from Egan Maritime Institute to CPS Gift Account for 8th Grade Maritime Studies/Oceanography Studies, \$19,298.00 Steve Sortevik made a motion to approve, Jennifer Iller seconded, with none opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve Donation from Nantucket Dolphins Swim Booster Club to NCS Community Pool, \$896.00 Steve Sortevik made a motion to approve, Jennifer Iller seconded, with none opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve Donation ReMain Nantucket to NCS, \$65,000.00 Steve Sortevik made a motion to approve, Jennifer Iller seconded, with none opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve Donation from Schmidt Family Foundation for technology and training for marketing strategies, \$12,500.00 Jennifer Iller made a motion to approve, Steve Sortevik seconded, with none opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve Donation from Community Foundation for Nantucket to NCS Nantucket Emergency Fund for CPR & Lifesaving Training Programs, \$7,045.00 Steve Sortevik made a motion to approve, Jennifer Iller seconded, with none opposed, the motion was approved.

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Vote to Approve M 2021 May 4, Meeting Minutes Jennifer Iller made a motion to approve the minutes, Tim Lepore seconded, with no one opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve the Transfers & Invoices for May 20 & June 1, 2021 Tim Lepore made a motion to approve, Jennifer Iller seconded, the motion was approved.

Sub-Committee/Work Group

Negotiations: Steve Sortevik reported he thinks the Facilities/Custodial CBA is finished and he is hoping to have a final draft ready for submission. Dr. Hallett agreed and said she would reach out to the Union for a draft copy. Mr. Sortevik thanked Facilities Director, Diane O’Neil for her ‘fantastic help in providing detailed information.’

Behavioral Health: Pauline Proch stated is it so important to have support for students and she appreciates everyone’s participation.

Student Council Representative

Miss Mack reported this will be her last meeting and she thanked the School Committee. She was happy to share Senior Ball/Banquet will take place June 2 and Friday, June 3 is Seniors’ Last Day, with Baccalaureate in the evening. Saturday June 12 will be the outdoor graduation and the parade. She talked about the Spring musical happening as a streaming film and she is excited to end the year. Mrs. Proch responded in thanks as well and appreciates all the perspective Amanda has brought to the table.

Horizon

The next meeting will be June 3 for the School Committee Vacancy interviews and following that will be the last remote meeting on Tuesday, June 15th at 6pm. There will be the Superintendent Evaluation, the Athletics Update, and MCAS Update.

At 7:21pm the School Committee adjourned on a motion made by Tim Lepore, seconded by Jennifer Iller and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Logan O’Connor, School Committee Clerk