

**Nantucket School Committee
Meeting Minutes
February 6, 2024**

Present Members: Chair Pauline Proch, Laura Gallagher Byrne, Timothy Lepore, Shantaw Bloise-Murphy, Esmeralda Martinez, and Student Representative Bruna Jenzura. Also present from the Studio, an NCTV Representative. This meeting is an in-person participation meeting in compliance with Governor Charlie Baker's statement allowing public bodies the ability to hold a meeting at a physical location that is open to the public, without requiring to provide alternative means of remote access.

The February 6, 2024, School Committee meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM in the Nantucket High School LGI by Chair Pauline Proch with a motion made to approve the agenda by Timothy Lepore, seconded by Shantaw Bloise-Murphy and approved unanimously.

Public Comment

Tracy Mailloux, assistant principal of the high school and a concerned taxpayer and community member, raised a concern regarding the budget hearing and the need for increased public awareness and participation, particularly during an election year. Expressing surprise at the low turnout, Ms. Mailloux suggested additional measures to publicize such meetings beyond legal notifications in newspapers and postings on the town website. She proposed the use of email blasts, especially the parents and families to ensure broader awareness of how school funds are allocated and how programs are developed.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Hallett provided an update on student February enrollment during the meeting, reporting a slight increase from 1,176 to 1,177 students compared to the previous month. She then invited Ms. Mailloux, Assistant Principal at Nantucket High School, to give a general overview of the E-Hall Pass pilot program that has recently been implemented at NHS.

Ms. Mailloux started by explaining that E-Hall Pass is an online digital system for students to request permission to leave the classroom for various reasons such as restroom visits, nurse visits, office errands, or visiting other teachers. While students still receive a physical pass for verification if stopped in the hallway, the digital system has proven effective in reducing incidents in the halls and bathrooms. Implemented shortly before or after the December holiday break, the program has led to a significant decrease in reported incidents, making it easier to investigate when necessary and holding students more accountable for their movements. Teachers have reported that students who previously took extended breaks using restroom passes now feel pressure to return promptly because their absence prevents other students from leaving the classroom. This peer pressure has resulted in students returning more quickly to avoid inconveniencing their classmates, with many students acknowledging that the new system encourages prompt return and minimizes disruption to the class.

Mrs. Gallagher Byrne asked what type of device it was managed through and if any other schools are using this. Ms. Mailloux explained that it is done through the Chromebooks. She also shared that the high school is looking to add older Chromebooks in each classroom specifically for E-Hall Pass signouts to avoid teacher interruption. Other schools are currently doing this.

Student representative Bruna Jenzura voiced a concern about the limitation on the number of students allowed out of class simultaneously, which could cause delays if students are not properly signed back in. Ms. Mailloux agreed, in the beginning, it was only allowed for 6 students and if a teacher forgot to sign a student in it would prevent some from going. Still a work in progress.

Mrs. Proch asked how long the data was stored. Ms. Mailloux replied 30 days which has been helpful in being able to track student patterns.

Mrs. Proch expressed her gratitude to everyone involved in the E-Hall Pass Pilot project, acknowledging the significant progress made since the initial discussions six months prior with the possible scenario of having volunteers sitting outside bathrooms. She extended her appreciation to staff and students for their patience and understanding while it is still a work in progress.

Dr. Hallett thanked Ms. Maillou, then reported on a few additional updates, starting with the participation of nine NHS students at the annual All Cape and Islands Music Festival, where over 250 students across the region performed in various ensembles. She shared positive feedback from a student participant and expressed hope for increased instrumental recruitment in the future.

Dr. Hallett then reported the State Board of Education's decision to reject the Department of Education's proposal to prioritize chronic absenteeism as part of the State's annual accountability ratings.

She also shared her recent meeting with the new Nantucket Chief of Police, Jody Kasper. She described the meeting as highly collaborative and recounted topics such as e-bike safety classes in September and March and shared that NPD is working on sending an additional SRO to the district mid-fall next year. Dr. Hallett and Chief Kasper intend to meet quarterly to foster ongoing collaboration.

Presentations and discussions of issues to the Committee

School Resource Officer Presentation - Officer Cassie Thompson

School Resource Officer Cassie Thompson provided an overview of her daily responsibilities and activities at the schools. She outlined her typical work hours, from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., with the flexibility to stay later as needed. She described her duties, including assisting with traffic during drop-off, conducting school check-ins, lockdown training, and teaching a criminal justice class for juniors and seniors. She also mentioned conducting building walkthroughs, dropping in on classrooms, and consulting with support staff regarding student concerns. Officer Thompson highlighted her role in managing pickup traffic and ensuring students leave the building promptly after hours. She discussed her involvement in training sessions, meetings with parents and students, collaborations with DCF and juvenile court cases, as well as investigations into potential crimes both on and off school grounds. Officer Thompson also emphasized her role in coordinating medical emergencies and ambulance responses while maintaining student privacy.

She highlighted her efforts to ensure the safety of students during outdoor activities, including periodic visits to recess areas and reminders to visitors about school hours. Officer Thompson also discussed various educational initiatives she oversees, such as safety bag distributions, bike safety classes, and internet safety sessions. She mentioned her collaboration with other agencies and departments for events like the Special Olympics, FONPS Bikeathon, and Touch-A-Truck Day with the Coast Guard and Nantucket Fire Department. Additionally, Officer Thompson shared her involvement in extracurricular activities such as coaching the girls' hockey team and driver's ed consequences class. She expressed excitement for an additional SRO to support and facilitate more after-school programs and events while maintaining school safety and student engagement.

The committee asked Officer Thompson about her relationship with the Police department and where she starts her day. Officer Thompson explained she starts each morning at the department getting ready and picking up her cruiser. She is also able to talk to patrol to get updates if any calls or situations involve any families from the prior night.

Mrs. Proch liked that she was involved with students in the court system.

Ms. Jenzura commented that her Intro to Criminal Justice class was good.

Superintendent Hallett thanked Officer Thompson and feels our SRO program is unique in its community-based style with students getting to know and being comfortable with Officer Thompson.

Eunice Ross Honorary Diploma - Kimal McCarthy, Town of Nantucket DEI Director

Dr. Kimal McCarthy, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Director for the Town of Nantucket, began by sharing the town's DEI commitment statement, emphasizing the importance of promoting equal access and inclusion in the community. He then delved into the historical significance of the Nantucket African Meeting House, highlighting its multifaceted role as a church, school, and gathering place for the black community in the 1820s, notably drawing attention to the upcoming bicentennial of the consecration of the African Meeting House on January 4th, 2025 and prompting the community to acknowledge this milestone. Dr. McCarthy explained that a group of leaders from cultural institutions convened in Spring 2023 to explore ways to commemorate this occasion, ultimately focusing on the life and legacy of Eunice Ross. Ross played a pivotal role in the integration of Nantucket's school system, with her exclusion from

the high school in 1840 leading to the enactment of the first law in the United States guaranteeing equal access to education. Despite subsequent setbacks, including resegregation efforts, Ross's perseverance paved the way for progress in educational equality. Dr. McCarthy underscored the significance of honoring Ross's contributions and highlighted historian Barbara Anne White's research on her life. The presentation concluded with a request on behalf of the Museum of African American History, the Nantucket Historical Association, and the town of Nantucket for the Nantucket School Committee to endorse the issuance of an honorary 2024 Nantucket High School diploma for Nantucket native Eunice Ross. Dr. McCarthy emphasized that such support would be instrumental in honoring Nantucket's past and recognizing the efforts of Dr. Hallett and the public schools in this endeavor, especially in light of the upcoming bicentennial celebration of the African Meeting House. Expressing gratitude for the committee's time, Dr. McCarthy eagerly welcomed any questions.

The committee unanimously agreed to support the issuance of an honorary 2024 Nantucket High School diploma for Nantucket native Eunice Ross, recognizing the significance of her story and contributions to Nantucket's history. Members of the committee expressed admiration for the initiative and commended Dr. McCarthy for presenting such an impactful proposal.

Dr. Hallett asked if Nantucket was the first school to integrate students of color. Dr. McCarthy responded, stating that to his knowledge, Nantucket's integrated school system during that period was among the first, despite potential claims of integration in a community in upstate New York. He emphasized the significance of Nantucket's pioneering efforts, considering the challenges of the era. Dr. McCarthy highlighted the lasting impact of Nantucket's continued integration after 1846.

District Improvement Plan, Midyear Updates

Superintendent Hallett provided a midyear review of the district Improvement plan, emphasizing the ongoing efforts to achieve outlined goals. She chose one goal from each district department to highlight. Goal 4 focused on enhancing diversified and culturally responsive communication. Efforts included revamping the district website for improved user experience and utilizing platforms like Remind and Instagram for outreach. Goal 6 aimed at providing inclusive and challenging learning experiences, with ongoing work on literacy needs assessments and professional development planning led by the Curriculum Director, Mellisa Devitt. Goal 7 addressed English Learner Education, with a focus on aligning curriculum and instructional materials to meet diverse needs, overseen by the new EL Director, Barbara Cohen. Additionally, Goal 9 focused on aligning health and wellness initiatives with the new PE/Wellness curriculum, with progress made through monthly meetings led by the Health and Wellness teams. Technological improvements under Goal 14 included upgrading equipment and enhancing network reliability, managed by Joanne Johnsen, the acting Tech Director. Lastly, Goal 16 aimed to ensure all coaches complete required certifications, with ongoing efforts led by the Athletic Department to increase completion rates through training opportunities. Despite challenges, progress has been made, with ongoing initiatives and collaborative efforts driving improvements across various facets of the district. The committee welcomed the update and expressed appreciation for the thorough review and continued dedication to enhancing the educational experience for all students.

Second Quarter Budget and Lunch Updates

Martin Anguelov, Chief Financial Officer, presented the second quarter updates, noting a \$2.3 million increase in expenditures compared to the same period last year, primarily driven by payroll obligations, a \$1.3 million rise in tuition expenses due to increased rates and student enrollment in out-of-district programs, and notable upticks in professional development and hardware/software costs. Payroll expenses remained consistent at 36%. Community School revenues exhibited steady growth, with a \$170,000 rise attributed to a general fund subsidy increase from the town and program revenue upticks. However, the School Lunch Program subsidy deficit expanded to \$93,000, necessitating close monitoring and daily collaboration with the food service director, Linda Peterson. Mr. Angulov highlighted ongoing challenges

in staffing shortages within the food service department, despite efforts to recruit and retain employees. Additionally, he discussed the uncertainty surrounding the continuation of Universal Free Lunch programs in Massachusetts, pending legislative decisions.

Committee discussions and votes to be taken

Vote to approve the donation from Stop & Shop for \$285.00 to NES Student Activity Fund. *Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve, Shantaw Bloise-Murphy seconded, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved*

Transfers and Invoices. *Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve, Shantaw Bloise-Murphy seconded, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved*

Sub-Committee/Work Group Report

Mrs. Gallagher Byrne reported on the Cape Cod Collaborative meeting and felt it was a profound experience.

Mrs. Proch reported that TA negotiations are moving forward nicely.

Dr. Lepore reported being on the search committee for the varsity football coach.

Student Council Representative - Bruna Jenzura

Ms. Jenzura didn't have much to report on but asked for a School lunch update.

Dr. Hallett acknowledged the difficulties faced due to staff absences. She explained that the absence of key personnel sometimes leads to last-minute decisions and limited menu variation. Dr. Hallett pledged to reach out to the Food Service Director and Chartwells, the contracted company, to discuss options for menu diversification. She emphasized the need for additional support from the company during the Director's absence and expressed hope for a swift resolution, whether through temporary staffing solutions or alternative support measures. Dr. Hallett conveyed gratitude and understanding and assured her of continued efforts to address the situation promptly.

Agenda for the next meeting, February 20, 2024 - AASA, School Committee Self Evaluation, Civics/MCAS Pilot Presentation (CPS), NES Assessments Presentation, Seal of Biliteracy Presentation, NCS Sports and Wellness

Workshop evaluation date is to be discussed further.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 7:33 PM by Timothy Lepore, seconded by Laura Gallagher Byrne, with none opposed, the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,
Katie Bedell
School Committee Clerk