

**Nantucket School Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**March 5, 2024**

Present Members: Chair Pauline Proch, Timothy Lepore, 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 March 5, 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 Esmeralda Martinez, seconded by Timothy Lepore and approved unanimously.

There was no public comment.

**Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Hallett reported that current enrollment is down by two students from last month, totaling 1,707 students compared to 1,709 last month, with one fewer student at NES, no change at NIS and CPS, and one fewer student at the high school, indicating a period of relative stability. She shared insights from her attendance at the American Association of School Administrators National Convention on Education, highlighting sessions on achieving equity for multilingual learners and equity in behavior prevention and response. Notable keynotes included discussions on embracing artificial intelligence in education and fostering positivity and happiness in school culture, with emphasis on the importance of safety and support for students. Additionally, Superintendent Hallett reflected on the impact of negative attitudes among adults in education and the importance of returning to the joy of teaching, expressing gratitude for the opportunity to collaborate with other district leaders.

Mrs. Proch inquired about specific initiatives or activities discussed by the speakers to foster a sense of acceptance, inclusion, and appreciation among staff, thereby enabling them to perform their best for students. She also raised questions about the district's awareness of staff sentiment and whether principals have a comprehensive understanding of staff morale.

Dr. Hallett indicated the importance of understanding the general sentiment among staff and mentioned plans to issue MTSS surveys within the next few weeks to gauge belongingness among parents, staff, students, and administrators. These surveys will provide insights into potential areas for growth. She also highlighted a program on happiness and productivity developed by Shawn Achor from Harvard, emphasizing the positive impact of supportive and respectful work culture on productivity. Dr. Hallett expressed her intention to share resources related to this program, such as the Orange Frog program for elementary schools, with principals and APs in upcoming meetings to explore implementation opportunities.

Dr. Hallett congratulated Anna Popnikolova for her achievement in advancing to the state finals of the annual Poetry Out Loud competition in Massachusetts. Anna's recitations of two poetry selections impressed the judges, earning her a spot in the finals, which will take place at the state house in Boston on Sunday, March 10th. Dr. Hallett expressed her enthusiasm and offered heartfelt congratulations to Anna for her outstanding accomplishment. She then invited Matthew Hunt to give a winter sports update.

On behalf of Travis Lombardi, the Athletic Director, Matthew Hunt, the Assistant Athletic Director, presented an update on the achievements and progress of student athletes during the winter sports season. Mr. Hunt began by expressing gratitude to the school committee for allowing him to provide the update in Mr. Lombardi's absence, who was attending the boy's basketball team's playoff game. He noted the significant distance traveled for the game and highlighted the team's dedication.

Mr. Hunt then proceeded to detail the successes of various sports teams. In girl's hockey, despite facing challenges, the team showed remarkable improvement. The team's resilience and determination bode well for its future, with plans for an independent schedule to foster growth and success. Similarly, girls

basketball experienced a turnaround season, qualifying for the state tournament after a hiatus and demonstrating marked improvement throughout the season. Indoor track and field marked its inaugural varsity season, competing admirably in multiple league meets and producing promising talents who qualified for the state meet. Swimming and diving continued their tradition of success, with the girls' team securing another league title and performing well at sectionals and states, reaffirming their status as a strong Division 2 program. Boys basketball continued to compete in the state tournament with an impressive 11-9 regular-season record, highlighted by a memorable win against Martha's Vineyard at the TD Garden. Boys hockey also enjoyed a successful season, with a particularly notable run in the state tournament, showcasing the team's unity and resilience in the face of adversity. Additionally, both CPS boys' and girls' basketball teams had outstanding seasons, with the boys winning the Cape Cod Youth Basketball League Championship and the girls going undefeated in their schedule, emphasizing skill development and teamwork. Mr. Hunt concluded by extending best wishes to the teams still participating in the state tournament and expressing appreciation for the ongoing support of the athletic programs from the school committee.

## **Presentations and discussions of issues to the Committee**

### **Dropout Rate Report**

Tracy Mailloux, Assistant Principal at NHS, presented the Dropout Report on behalf of Ms. Vasil, who was absent due to illness. Ms. Mailloux began by acknowledging the relatively low dropout rate, with six reported dropouts out of 582 active students at the high school, equating to just over 1% of the total school population. Notably, one of the dropouts from the previous year had re-enrolled and was on track to graduate in June, thus effectively reducing the dropout count to five. Ms. Mailloux highlighted some demographic breakdowns, noting that four out of the six dropouts were white students. Over the past decade, the school has seen a decrease in dropout numbers, attributed to ongoing implementations and interventions. These include the addition of an English Language (EL) teacher to reduce class sizes, collaboration between the Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) coach and teachers, and the introduction of EL-supported courses in various subjects. Furthermore, initiatives like the Accelerate Academy for multilingual learners and Apex credit recovery programs have been instrumental in providing additional support and opportunities for students. Ms. Mailloux emphasized the importance of ongoing professional development, parent engagement, and partnerships with community resources to address dropout prevention comprehensively. Looking ahead, plans include further professional development to ensure consistent implementation of SEI strategies, parent information nights with translated materials, and the exploration of new approaches for students with interrupted schooling experiences. Ms. Mailloux also mentioned the need for additional social-emotional support, including the potential hiring of a bilingual District clinician to assist EL students facing trauma.

Dr. Lepore asked at what grade level students were dropping out.

Ms. Mailloux responded that she didn't have the specific data in front of her but noted that junior year appears to be a critical period, where students either become highly motivated to succeed or feel overwhelmed by the challenges ahead. In her experience at the high school, she observed that juniors and rising seniors faced difficulties in obtaining the necessary credits for graduation, which she identified as a significant issue.

### **MCAS Civics Pilot - Mellisa Devitt, Director of Curriculum & Assessment for the Humanities and Dan Farrell, CPS 8th Grade Civics Teacher**

Ms. Devitt reported on the MCAS Civics Pilot program, acknowledging the support from Dan Farrell, 8th-grade civics teacher, and Mike Horton, CPS Principal. She expressed her appreciation for the support received and highlighted the significance of engaging in the Civics field test this year, with plans for the test to be live next year. The purpose of the test is to evaluate new questions and ensure the validity and reliability of the test bank. The components of the exam include a state-level performance task and an end-of-year course test, focusing on students' civic content knowledge and analytical skills. Ms. Devitt outlined the topics covered in the state-level performance tasks, with Nantucket assigned topic six, which pertains to the structure of Massachusetts state and local government. She provided details on the end-of-course test format and the optional local-level performance tasks, emphasizing the importance of student participation. The timeline of the Civics program's development was presented, highlighting the

progress made over the years, leading up to the current Civics field test. She discussed the next steps, including implementing the investigating history Grant for grades six and seven and applying for the Democratic Knowledge Project Grant for eighth grade. Ms. Devitt and Mr. Horton commended the CPS teachers for their dynamic approach to teaching history and social studies. Mr. Farrell emphasized the importance of the topic assigned and shared his excitement about the upcoming changes and resources. Mr. Horton highlighted the significance of high-quality resources and the potential for applied learning in all subject areas, leading to a dynamic learning environment in the school.

Dr. Lepore expressed the importance of understanding government processes.

Ms. Martinez agreed with Dr. Lepore and asked how the topic was picked. Ms. Devitt explained the topic was assigned.

Ms. Proch expressed her appreciation for the enthusiasm demonstrated by the leadership, emphasizing its importance in engaging students. She acknowledged the value of initiatives like the citizen tests, highlighting their role in fostering student involvement and understanding. She thanked the leadership for their efforts, noting the positive impact on student engagement and learning experiences.

### **Committee discussions and votes to be taken**

Vote to recommend \$40,778,395 for the FY2025 Nantucket Education Public Appropriation (Article Eight of the 2024 Annual Town Meeting of Taxpayers). The public school total budget appropriation is recommended at \$40,178,395 - \$33,345,870 for payroll and \$6,832,525 for operating expenses; and an additional \$600,000 Community School appropriation for payroll. And to AUTHORIZE use of School Department accounts as listed. Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve, Esmeralda Martinez, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved

Vote to approve the donation from Nalu for \$200.00 to CPS News, Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve, Esmeralda Martinez, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved

Vote to approve the NHS Spanish & Diversity Club field trip to New York City, May 9-12, 2024, Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve, Esmeralda Martinez, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved

Vote to approve the January 23, 2024 School Committee Minutes, Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve, Esmeralda Martinez, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved

Vote to approve the February 6, 2024 Public Hearing Minutes, Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve, Esmeralda Martinez, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved

Vote to approve the February 6, 2024 School Committee Minutes, Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve, Esmeralda Martinez, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved

Vote to approve the February 20, 2024 School Committee Minutes, Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve, Esmeralda Martinez, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved

Transfers and Invoices, Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve, Esmeralda Martinez, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved

### **Sub-Committee/Work Group Report**

Dr. Hallett provided an update on behalf of the school committee members who were not present. She announced the conclusion of TA (Teachers' Association) negotiations, noting that an agreement had been reached pending union ratification. She mentioned that negotiations for custodians and grounds unit would commence soon, and expressed the need for a representative for those negotiations, for which Dr. Lepore volunteered. She also reported a Policy Subcommittee meeting the following week.

Dr. Hallett sadly spoke of the resignation of Dr. Kimal McCarthy, a consultant to the DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) subcommittee and the former Town DEI Director. She acknowledged the need for the committee to regroup and discuss the direction they want to pursue in light of this change. Dr. Hallett expressed gratitude for the ongoing efforts of the committee despite this setback.

Ms. Proch provided an update on the lunch program meeting, noting that it had to be rescheduled due to its initial scheduling during the school break. Once the date is finalized, the plan is to visit separate schools and have lunch, as discussed in the previous meeting.

There was a discussion about weighing the trash to see the waste.

Dr. Hallett explained students need to be served a complete meal as a state requirement, even if they do not want it. Ms. Proch brought up the question of how many staff members are eating from the schools. Superintendent Hallett offered to send a survey to staff members.

**Student Council Representative - Bruna Jenzura**

Ms. Jenzura reported the varsity basketball game and hockey game scheduled for the following day. She announced that the eighth-grade parent night has been rescheduled to March 13th at 6:00 PM. She also reminded everyone about the upcoming NHS musical, Pippin, which will take place on the 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th of next week, with evening performances at 6:00 PM and a matinee at 2:00 PM on Sunday. Ms. Jenzura noted that the ELA MCAS is approaching later this month and that spring sports tryouts are scheduled for the end of the month.

**Agenda for the next meeting,** March 12, 2024, Workshop Meeting at 5:00 PM School committee self-evaluation, public comment policy BEDH, Superintendent goals  
March 19, 2024 - Update on Student Support Services, Special Education Update, ACK-SEPAC, School Committee Self-Evaluation Results

Motion to adjourn at 6:48 PM by Timothy Lepore, seconded by Esmeralda Martinez, with none opposed, the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,  
Katie Bedell  
School Committee Clerk