

Nantucket School Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 2, 2024

Present Members: Chair Pauline Proch, Vice Chair Laura Gallagher Byrne, Timothy Lepore, 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 April 2, 2024, School Committee meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM in the Nantucket High School LGI by Pauline Proch with a motion made to approve the agenda by Laura Gallagher Byrne, seconded by Timothy Lepore and approved unanimously.

At the start of the meeting Mrs. Proch on behalf of the School Committee expressed sincere gratitude and support for teachers, administrators, staff, parents, and students amidst challenging times. She emphasized the importance of self-care, encouraging everyone to take time for themselves. Mrs. Proch assured that the committee stands by them, appreciates their positive attitudes, and acknowledges their dedication despite the ongoing challenges.

There was no public comment.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Hallett provided an update on student enrollment, noting a slight increase from 1,777 in March to 1,778 in April, with growth observed primarily at the lower schools (NES, NIS, and CPS). NES grew by five students, NIS by one, and CPS by two, while the high school experienced a decrease of seven students. Dr. Hallett acknowledged the fluctuation, attributing it partially to various factors including students receiving letters regarding attendance. She mentioned the postponement of the Massachusetts Department of Education student achievement awards until the next meeting on April 23rd. Then invited Chip Clunie to discuss the 24 Surfside project.

Chip Clunie, the Director of Facilities, provided an update on the 24 Surfside project. He informed the committee that the property was acquired at the beginning of 2023, with plans to reconstruct the house into offices to alleviate pressure at the elementary school. The approved plan included seven offices and one large meeting space, with a residence on the second floor. However, upon issuing bids for subcontracting packages, several essential components were missing, including bids for electrical, HVAC, and waterproofing. Additionally, no bids were received for general contracting. Consequently, the team decided to explore modular units as an alternative solution. Mr. Clunie is currently working on developing a new design services bid package with the intention of rebidding the project within the month. The hope is that the modular design approach will be more cost-effective and better meet the project's requirements. He also shared visuals of the property and mentioned plans to potentially relocate the garage. He credited Michel Kremer for assembling the slideshow and invited feedback.

Mrs. Gallagher Byrne asked who the resident would be. Mr. Clunie responded that it would be for staff, but nothing has been decided yet. The committee asked about the rumble strips that used to be in front of the schools and the repainting of the crosswalks. Mr. Clunie reported that the DPW has requested bids to get the work done and he will keep on it.

Dr. Hallett provided a recap of recent events at Nantucket High School concerning the backlash from a photo depicting a racial slur that surfaced on social media. She mentioned that the school initiated an immediate investigation and has been collaborating with students and parents regarding the incident, which occurred outside of school hours but has impacted the student body. Dr. Hallett emphasized the importance of creating meaningful opportunities for students to process and discuss next steps to prevent further incidents, noting that these discussions are expected to take place before April Break. While disciplinary actions cannot be shared publicly, she reiterated the school's stance of not condoning or tolerating racial slurs or racist behavior within the community.

Superintendent Hallett acknowledged National Assistant Principal Appreciation Week, expressing gratitude and congratulations to six assistant principals present at the meeting for their invaluable contributions to maintaining school operations and fostering a positive learning environment. She commended their dedication, hard work, and leadership in supporting students and staff, underscoring their role as crucial members of the school community. Dr. Hallett concluded by expressing appreciation and gratitude for their service.

Project 351- Pam Pellegrino, CPS Guidance Counselor, and Robert Graves, Eighth Grade Project Lead the Way Ambassador

Pam Pellegrino, CPS school counselor expressed her pleasure and honor to be sharing on the past two years and her extensive experience with Project 351 as an educator, mentor, and volunteer for 14 years. She highlighted the delight she finds in serving the community through Project 351 and mentoring young people to unite, act, and lead alongside leaders across the state from 8th to 12th grade. Ms. Pellegrino recounted the remarkable selection process this year, where numerous students were nominated by Middle School teachers to represent the values of unite, act, and lead. Despite the challenge of selection, one individual stood out for their exceptional commitment to community service, embodying these values through their actions at school, within their family, and in the wider community. Ms. Pellegrino commended this student for his outstanding dedication to service, noting his efforts have garnered recognition from other communities across the state, with Nantucket leading the charge. She introduced Robert Graves to share his service journey through Project 351.

Robert Graves presented his involvement with Project 351, starting with his experience at launch day in Boston, where he joined other ambassadors for a day of community service honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King. He shared the impact of the event, which reached over 20,000 lives, highlighting the organization's overall impact of over 3 million lives since its founding. Graves then discussed the clothing drive he organized on the island to support Cradles to Crayons, a nonprofit that provides clothes to those in need across Massachusetts. He proudly announced that they had collected 214 bags of clothing so far. Mr. Graves showed photos from launch day and outlined upcoming events, including a beach cleanup for Earth Day and a leadership reunion in June. He explained the process of sorting and cleaning the donated clothes before sending them to Boston. Dr. Lepore inquired about the logistics, prompting discussion about the sorting process and opportunities for community involvement. Mr. Graves explained the process of quality-checking the clothing. He invited volunteers to help sort clothing at CPS cafeteria on Friday, with promises of pizza from Mike Horton. Ms. Pellegrino commended Mr. Graves for expanding the project into a community-wide effort and encouraged participation from various groups, including Boy Scouts and the high school student council. The committee commended Robert for his leadership and hard work.

Student Opportunity Act (SOA) Presentation, Superintendent Elizabeth Hallett

Dr. Hallett presented on the Student Opportunity Act plan, it was highlighted that Massachusetts has been a national leader in providing high-quality learning experiences for students. However, it was noted that significant gaps exist in experiences and outcomes for marginalized students, particularly those with economic disadvantages, diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, disabilities, and English learners. The presentation outlined the history of the Student Opportunity Act, which began in 2021 but was interrupted by the pandemic. The plan emphasized the need to address these gaps and presented a heat map analysis to identify priority student groups. Two focus areas were identified: improving student health and wellness, and fostering positive environments. Strategies included implementing multi-tiered systems of support and restorative practices across all schools, with a focus on refining support processes for English learners. Additionally, the plan highlighted the importance of developing district-wide literacy initiatives to support English learners in both English and their first language. She explained the importance of examining and adopting equitable curriculum materials to ensure students feel connected to their learning. Expansion of restorative practices and responsive classroom approaches district-wide was highlighted, along with increased professional development on cultural competency and culturally responsive instruction. The significance of sheltered English instruction for transitioning English learners into mainstream classrooms was underscored. There is a need for refining thresholds and progress monitoring for tiers 2 and 3 within the multi-tier system of support. She clarified that the Student Opportunity Act

(SOA) plan serves as a district improvement plan for the Department of Education, requiring evidence-based programs to support student progress over three years. Hallett noted that while there's no specific funding attached to the SOA plan apart from Chapter 70 funds, it's an expectation for districts to follow. She emphasized the importance of aligning with the Department of Education's vetted curriculum ratings to ensure adherence to evidence-based practices.

Mrs. Proch asked about the MTSS process.

Dr. Hallett elaborated on the role of MTSS (multi-tiered system of support), explaining that it encompasses tiers one, two, and three, with tier one focusing on general instruction, including sheltered English instruction (SEI) within mainstream classrooms. While SEI is considered tier one instruction, students with stronger language proficiency need to receive it in regular classrooms rather than in separate ESL services. She emphasized that MTSS meetings address concerns and determine interventions, which may occur within the general education classroom or through additional support blocks for literacy or math. Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are reserved for students requiring special education accommodations beyond general classroom interventions. Dr. Hallett stressed the importance of prioritizing the general education classroom to provide the least restrictive environment for students, with interventions being considered through the MTSS process. Attendees queried whether this approach represented a significant departure from past practices, to which Dr. Hallett affirmed that while the core principles remain, there's a clearer definition and greater emphasis on strengthening the general education classroom, aligning with practices such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

School Committee Self-Evaluation Results

Chair Pauline Proch presented the results of the school committee's self-evaluation, highlighting areas of agreement and disagreement among members. She noted that the evaluation process involved individual assessments followed by a workshop for collective discussion, aiming to foster dialogue and address differing perspectives within the committee. With members ranging from 30-plus years of service to less than a year, Proch acknowledged the inevitable variations in understanding and experiences. Notable disagreements were highlighted, such as the extent of committee members' participation in educational workshops and conferences, with discussions revolving around the availability of professional development opportunities and differing levels of attendance at conferences. Under member relations, a disagreement arose regarding the amount of time given to review meeting materials prior to sessions, with considerations given to the challenges of preparation timelines and members' work commitments. Another point of contention was whether the superintendent should inform the committee of major personnel decisions, prompting discussions about the scope of information that should be shared with the committee, with plans for a future workshop on the ethics of information disclosure. Mrs. Proch emphasized the need for clarity on the committee's role and boundaries regarding access to information. Under strategic planning and fiscal management, noting the committee's approach to district improvement plans and the involvement of community members in decision-making processes. She also touched on public relations efforts, emphasizing the role of individual schools in disseminating information to their communities. She highlighted the need for diverse representation in decision-making processes and efforts to ensure accessibility for all families, particularly regarding surveys and outreach efforts. Lastly, there was a discussion on the physical setting's impact on productive discussions, suggesting improvements to the setup for future meetings. She concluded by expressing willingness to work on logistical improvements and thanked attendees for their participation in the evaluation process.

Committee discussions and votes to be taken

Vote to approve the March 12, 2024 School Committee Workshop Minutes;

Vote to approve the March 19, 2024 School Committee Meeting Minutes;

Vote to approve the donation from Nantucket Sustainable Development Corp. for \$5,426.00 to NHS Agriculture Class, Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve, seconded by Laura Gallagher Byrne, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved

Vote to approve the donation from Combined Jewish Philanthropies (CJP) for \$3,000.00 to CPS Staff for travel costs for the Applied Learning Leadership Discovery Program, Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve, seconded by Laura Gallagher Byrne, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved

Vote to approve the donation from Dorothy Harrison Egan Foundation for \$50,000.00 to benefit the Nurse Educator position, Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve, seconded by Laura Gallagher Byrne, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved

Vote to approve the donation from MUSAK for \$5,000.00 to NHS Music Department, Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve, seconded by Laura Gallagher Byrne, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved

Vote to approve Transfers and Invoices, Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve, seconded by Laura Gallagher Byrne, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved

Sub-Committee/Work Group Report

Mrs. Gallagher Byrne reported on attending the Nantucket Education Trust meeting which was focused on the units at Cow Pond and the approval of the donation of eclipse glasses for all of the school community.

Mrs. Proch reported on attending a lunch meeting and acknowledged that they hadn't met for a while and discussed the idea of meeting for lunch, which was well-received. She expressed openness to exploring various possibilities for future meetings. It was emphasized that the intention to involve Linda Peterson was not a reflection of her abilities but rather a consideration of management and food quality concerns from Chartwells. Improving the quality of food for the children was highlighted as a priority.

Dr. Hallett through the Chair reported that there was an upcoming Diversity Subcommittee. Also, the Facilities and Grounds negotiating committee will begin soon.

Student Council Representative - Bruna Jenzura

Ms. Jenzura reported that MCAS testing was last week along with the start of mock exams for AP tests. Spring sports will also be starting this weekend with games against the Vineyard. The Galapagos trip is also taking place during the April break. She then asked the committee if they had a chance to try the school lunches.

Mrs. Proch responded not yet, they wanted to contact the Principals first.

Agenda for the next meeting, April 23, 2024

Motion to adjourn at 7:13 PM by Timothy Lepore, seconded by Laura Gallagher Byrne, with none opposed, the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,
Katie Bedell
School Committee Clerk