

**Nantucket School Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
December 5, 2023**

Present Members: Chair Pauline Proch, Esmerelda Martinez, Shantaw Bloise-Murphy, 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 December 5, 2023, School Committee meeting was called to order at 6:03 PM in the Nantucket High School LGI by Chair Pauline Proch with a motion made to approve the agenda by Esmerelda Martinez, seconded by Shantaw Bloise-Murphy and approved unanimously.

**There was no Public Comment**

**Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Hallett reported that the current enrollment for December is 1,697, showing an increase of three students from the previous month. The changes in enrollment include a decrease of two students at the elementary school, an increase of one student at the Intermediate School, no change at the middle school, and four new students at the high school. She also discussed the school calendar for the 2024-2025 academic year. Notable adjustments were made, including the addition of four professional development days in August due to the Cape Cod collaborative professional development day moving to November 5th. Three vacation days in November were allocated for the Thanksgiving holiday. Additionally, two full vacation weeks were scheduled from December 23rd to January 3rd, considering the challenges posed by Christmas and New Year's falling on Wednesdays. Despite the complexity, the final day of school is set for June 23rd, with adjustments for the June 19th holiday and a half-day on Monday. The proposed calendar awaits approval at the next school committee meeting, having already been discussed with the district leadership team and confirmed with the NTA. No questions were raised during the presentation.

Superintendent Hallett took a moment to celebrate the retirement of Jennifer Erichsen, who has served as the Tech Director since 2018. Mrs. Erichsen joined the school system from the town of Nantucket, where she held positions such as Info Systems Coordinator and IT Administrator at the police department starting in 2004. Dr. Hallett acknowledged Mrs. Erichsen's significant accomplishments, particularly her role in implementing and rapidly expanding the one-to-one program, crucial for transitioning to online learning during the pandemic. She successfully guided the school system through a severe cyber attack in February, leading to improved security protocols and processes. Dr. Hallett expressed gratitude for Mrs. Erichsen's dedication, highlighting her efforts in supporting the district leadership team and her own Tech Team. Despite ongoing challenges, including the never-ending battle with NPS Wireless, Dr. Hallett congratulated Mrs. Erichsen on her retirement and expressed excitement for her to embark on the next chapter of her life, particularly enjoying the role of being a grandmother. The school committee joined in thanking Jennifer for her contributions, wishing her well in her retirement, and acknowledging that she will be greatly missed.

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

**Technology Update, Budget Presentation - Jennifer Erichsen, Director of Technology**

Mrs. Erichsen went through the Technology Team members and accomplishments. In her report on the Technology budget, she provided an overview of the current state of the Tech Team, noting minimal

changes in team positions since the last presentation in June. She highlighted the presence of technicians in each school, along with a database administrator and the Tech Integrationist. Mrs. Erichsen discussed various accomplishments, including the successful upgrade of the auditorium with new speakers and sound systems. Updates to the wireless controller and cyber security training were also mentioned.

Mrs. Erichsen emphasized ongoing efforts to enhance educational technology, such as the provision of new interactive panels and the replacement of smartboards in classrooms that are six or more years old. The report touched on the implementation of password changes and dual authentication for teachers, as well as the distribution of laptops to seniors. She also presented a technology needs projection for the next seven years, providing insights into planned upgrades and replacements.

The report delved into the administrative functions handled by the Tech Team, including the use of LINE wise for classroom monitoring and web filtering. Mrs. Erichsen highlighted key managed services agreements with vendors like Wall-E Computers and Winslow Technologies to ensure efficient networking, virtual server management, and backup system support. She discussed plans for recycling old inventory and outlined the continuous efforts to improve the speed and reliability of the wireless environment.

Mrs. Erichsen concluded the presentation by addressing the one-to-one program, emphasizing that every student in grades K through 12 is assigned a school-issued device. She outlined the responsibilities of students and families, covering aspects like device usage, email etiquette, and digital citizenship. Jennifer provided insights into the security measures in place, including the use of mobile device management (MDM) for iPads and specific management consoles for Chromebooks and Windows devices.

The floor was then opened for questions, with committee members inquiring about the replacement of outdated technology, support for the community school, and clarifications on the use of smart boards. Jennifer provided detailed responses, addressing concerns and offering insights into the ongoing efforts to enhance the technology infrastructure within the school system.

Mrs. Bloise-Murphy asked how often are students required to change passwords along with what the cost was for parents to replace a device.

Mrs. Erichsen replied the general cost is \$25 for the first time and potentially up to \$250 in cases of negligence or loss.

### **Veritas Presentation - Anna Popnikolova, Editor in Chief and Henry Crosby, Assistant Editor in Chief**

Veritas Editor-in-Chief Anna Popnikolova introduced Henry Crosby, the Assistant Editor-in-Chief, and Joan Harris, the Associate Editor, who was unable to make the meeting.

Mr. Crosby provided an overview of the paper cycle for the monthly newspaper. The paper cycle involves two weeks of writing and two weeks of production, where they lay out the content, ensuring cohesion between articles, pictures, and advertisements. They produce 200 copies per print and distribute them to 20 locations, including high school, middle school, town locations, the library, and various coffee shops. He announced the addition of seven new positions this year, such as associate editor, website editor, Spanish editor for translations, copy editor, graphic design editor, social media manager, and assistant photo editor. The team has expanded to 15 members, with 30 overall contributors helping with article writing.

Ms. Popnikolova outlined goals for the year, including re-entering student press competitions and expanding their presence in various departments. The photo department has grown to five photographers, the Spanish section is translating three to four articles per issue, and efforts are underway to revamp the website, enhance social media presence, and improve advertising strategies. The team is also focused on

building a strong team of translators for the Spanish section. Overall, Veritas is looking forward to a successful year with renewed initiatives and increased engagement.

### **Federal Grants - Mellisa Devitt, Barbara Cohen, Deb Gately, and Dr. Hallett**

Superintendent Hallett started the presentation by introducing Melissa Devitt, the Director of Curriculum and Assessment responsible for Title I, II, and IV. Barbara Cohen, the Director of English Language Education, oversees Title III. Superintendent Hallett mentioned her involvement in discussing ESSER, which is reaching its conclusion. Dr. Deborah Gately, Director of Special Services, will cover IDEA, focusing on special education grants. It was noted that Sherri Lewis, initially included, will be removed from the discussion as her part pertains to a state grant rather than a federal one, with plans for her return at a later time.

Mrs. Devitt started by highlighting the strategic initiatives listed at the top, focusing on the allocation of Title funds to support these initiatives. She oversees Title I, II, and IV, while Ms. Cohen manages Title III. She emphasized the use of funds for summer school, typically a five-week program, and professional development, with a specific emphasis on reading instruction for Title I, language students for Title III, and behavior management for Title IV. The strategic initiative also involves mentoring, with 37 new educator hires this year receiving one-on-one mentors funded by Title funds. Ms. Cohen then discussed Title III, which supports parent engagement throughout the school year. The presentation outlined the available Title funds, totaling over \$56,000, covering various expenses, including salaries, retirement, summer school coordination, teachers, TAs, consultants, private school funding, and new allocations for homeless students, addressing transportation needs. A portion of the funds, over \$31,000, is allocated to mentoring, and Title IV involves \$4,000 for a responsive classroom program, implemented in elementary and middle schools.

Ms. Cohen provided details about Title III, noting that the grant has increased. The majority of this amount is allocated to summer school and six full-time teachers. Additionally, \$5,000 is used for supplemental texts, including books in Spanish, Portuguese, and Russian, to support EL learners. Another \$4,000 is directed towards membership subscriptions and events. She briefly revisited Title I, emphasizing the substantial increase in the grant to \$166,000, up almost \$100,000 from the previous year. This increase was attributed to the census results, rectifying a drop in the 2021-22 period. The return to normal funding levels has been crucial in addressing gaps and allowing for important changes. Ms. Cohen expressed gratitude for the restoration of funding and hopes for its continuity without further drops.

Dr. Hallett spoke on the ESSER III expenditures, particularly ESSER I and ESSER II, which have been fully expended, while ESSER III, the largest of the three grants, must be utilized by the end of the current school year. The requirements for ESSER III include addressing learning loss, implementing evidence-based interventions, focusing on social and emotional academic needs, and targeting underserved student subgroups. The spending focus has consistently centered around these aspects. Dr. Hallett presented highlighted areas of ESSER III expenditures, emphasizing professional development, summer school, educational supplies such as reading software, snacks, and other related items. Notably, there is still approximately \$200,000 to be expended, allowing for adjustments and reallocation of funding from supplies to further enhance professional development and services.

Dr. Gately provided details on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. (IDEA) Federal Entitlement Grants, including a commitment of about \$62,000 to Orton Gillingham certification training. This training initiative involves 12 teachers from NIS, CPS, and NHS, with a focus on language-based learning disabilities. The feedback from teachers has been positive, indicating excitement and tangible benefits. The funds are also directed towards co-teaching professional development, salaries for the grade three IDC teacher, TA positions, private school services, a new IEP program, an occupational therapist,

consultants, behavioral support, and evaluation materials. She elaborated on the allocation of funds for out-of-district transportation, which is part of the obligation under IDEA to support families and students placed at out-of-district schools. The unique challenge faced is that traditional bus transportation doesn't apply, as the school bus is essentially a boat, so alternative means are followed for transportation. Additionally, there was an extra allocation of a little over \$4,500 as resolution funds for private schools. The allocation formula involves accounting for the number of students attending private schools, comparing it from one year to the next, and making adjustments accordingly. Dr. Gately collaborates directly with the heads of schools at both private schools to determine the usage of these funds. While the funds are often directed toward professional development, Dr. Gately highlighted that it's not always the case. Furthermore, the early childhood special education grant, amounting to \$1,187, is utilized to fund a partial salary (about 30%) for an Early Childhood teaching assistant within their program. The grant's flexibility allows for adjustments to meet evolving needs.

Superintendent Hallett concluded the presentation by highlighting the ongoing nature of title grants and IDEA, expressing gratitude for their consistent availability. She emphasized the significance of these grants, particularly in terms of funding from the federal government and enrollment markers, ensuring a continuous and stable financial support system. However, she acknowledged that Esser grants, crucial for professional development focused on student achievement, are set to expire by 2025. Dr. Hallett expressed concern about the potential "ESSER cliff", where funding will decrease these grants disappear, and acknowledged the collective concern among superintendents across the Commonwealth. Despite these challenges, Dr. Hallett conveyed confidence in NPS's financial position, thanks to the diligent efforts of the finance director. She highlighted the district's successful utilization of Esser grants and mentioned the need to increase the general fund budget lines to sustain high-quality professional development.

Mrs. Bloise-Murphy asked how funds get allocated for transportation for unhoused students

Dr. Gately spoke of the challenge of dealing with students classified as "unhoused." Identifying them is the first step, and the school maintains a database for this purpose during registration. If students share changes in their living situation, the school ensures they have transportation. However, it can be tricky to identify these situations, and ongoing efforts are needed. Sometimes, students later inform the school of living with someone else, requiring adjustments. Throughout the year, changes in living arrangements are communicated, and the school accommodates these adjustments. Despite challenges, the school is committed to supporting students needing transportation assistance, especially those in the Upper Middle School through high school, and appreciates cooperation from students and their families in addressing these needs.

Mrs. Bloise Murphy asked for an explanation of private school funds.

Dr. Gately explained that the process involves tracking students who qualify for special education services from year to year. If there is a change in the number of qualifying students in the following year, the federal government provides additional funding to accommodate those changes.

Mrs. Proch wanted to know if the IDEA grant includes parent education. Dr. Gately shared that they have been awarded a state grant, which will include parent education. Although the details are not yet known, Dr. Cohen and Dr. Gately will collaborate on organizing family nights. These events aim to address the upcoming changes at the state level, particularly the introduction of a new Individualized Education Program (IEP) form. While some districts have already implemented it, they have been gradually adopting and providing training for the new student-centered and focused IEP form. Simultaneously, they will be implementing a new IEP management system. To engage families and keep them informed about these changes, they plan to conduct family engagement nights starting in the spring.

Mrs. Proch also asked if Orton Gillingham was the only reading program being used. Dr. Gately replied no, there were several others, but Orton Gillingham is one of the best.

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

Vote to approve the April 17, 2025 - April 26, 2025 High School WWII Europe Field Trip. *EM made a motion to approve, SB seconded, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved*

Vote to approve the October 15, 2023 meeting minutes. *EM made a motion to approve, SB seconded, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved*

Transfers and Invoices. *EM made a motion to approve, SB seconded, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved*

**Sub-Committee/Work Group Report** - Mrs. Blouse-Murphy reported a Diversity meeting tomorrow and Policy rescheduled to January 8 and Mrs. Proch stated there was an upcoming TA negotiation meeting Thursday.

#### **Student Council Representative - Bruna Jenzura**

Bruna Jenzura reported on the upcoming school events, including the first winter games. Swimming is scheduled for Thursday at 5:00 p.m., and it's a home game. Girls varsity basketball will play against MV on Saturday, and girls varsity hockey also has a game against MV, both of which are home games. Additionally, there is "December Delight " on Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The Dessert Cabaret is scheduled for next Monday at 6:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., with two sessions. The student council is planning holiday activities, including Spirit Week and various themed days leading up to the start of the holidays on the 22nd. Boys varsity basketball is set for next Tuesday, and the FAFSA forms are expected to come out at the end of December.

**Agenda for the next meeting**, December 19, 2023 - FY23 Annual Report, VOCAL Data Presentation, Adams., NCS Presentation

Motion to adjourn at 7:14 PM by Esmerelda Martinez seconded by Shantaw Bloise-Murphy, with none opposed, the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,  
Katie Bedell  
School Committee Clerk