

**Nantucket School Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
May 21, 2024**

Present Members: Chair Pauline Proch, Vice Chair Laura Gallagher Byrne, Timothy Lepore, and Esmeralda Martinez. 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 May 21, 2024, School Committee meeting was called to order at 6:01 PM in the Nantucket High School LGI by Chair Pauline Proch with a motion made to approve the agenda by Timothy Lepore, seconded by Esmeralda Martinez and approved unanimously.

**Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Hallett opened her report by commending the recent Nantucket Golf Club scholarship ceremony, highlighting it as a spectacular event. During the ceremony, 26 students were celebrated as 2024 NET Scholars. Of these, 15 were acknowledged for their plans to enter the professional workforce, receiving various scholarship awards. The remaining 11 students were honored for their academic achievements, community service, and overall excellence as exemplary citizens of Nantucket High School and the larger community.

Special congratulations were extended to Henry Crosby, Archie Ferguson, and Chloe Marrero, who each were awarded full-tuition scholarships. Superintendent Hallett expressed immense pride in these students and emphasized the talent and special qualities of all the NET Scholars. Following this, Superintendent Hallett invited Principal Mandy Vasil to the podium to discuss the upcoming year-end activities planned for Nantucket High School seniors, leading up to graduation.

Principal Mandy Vasil shared an update on the exciting end-of-year events for Nantucket High School seniors, emphasizing both the excitement and anxiety that comes with graduation. The key events include:

- **Senior Meeting:** Scheduled for May 30th, this meeting will include a presentation about Eunice Ross, who will receive an honorary diploma.
- **Senior Ball:** Taking place on May 31st at the NET Yacht Club from 6:00 to 9:00 PM.
- **Senior Breakfast:** Held on June 7th, marking the last full day of classes for seniors, ending with a countdown tradition in the Hall of the Well.
- **Senior Awards:** Scheduled for June 11th at 6:00 PM in the auditorium.
- **Graduation Rehearsals:** From June 12th to 14th, with rehearsals on the football field and a walk-through at other schools.
- **Baccalaureate:** On June 13th at the Unitarian Church on Orange Street.
- **Graduation Ceremony:** On June 14th at 6:00 PM, with a rain date set for June 15th.

The parade's timing remains uncertain. All events aim to celebrate the seniors' achievements and mark their transition to the next phase of their lives.

Dr. Hallett announced an update for parents regarding e-bikes on campus, emphasizing safety and compliance with regulations. As the weather improves and students are more active, Hallett reminded parents that e-bikes are not to be ridden on campus. Students must register their e-bikes with the school office and walk them while on school grounds. Additionally, anyone under 16 is legally required to wear a helmet. A bike safety class for middle and high school students is being planned. She then highlighted upcoming arts events, including the CPS drama club's successful presentation of "Seussical the Musical Junior" and the All-Town Band and Orchestra Concert featuring musicians from various schools. The High School Combined Choir will perform "Considering Matthew Shepard: A Choral Suite" by Craig

Hella Johnson on May 23rd at the Congregational Church.

The Dreamland's Addiction Project involved students in a powerful applied theater performance of "Long Day's Journey Into Night," addressing addiction and abuse through introspection and discussion. The initiative was part of the Theater Speaks program funded by the Town of Nantucket, aiming to continue impactful programming with potential future funding.

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

#### **Guidance Update - Courtney Foster, Chris Miemiec, and Yuliya Chumak**

Courtney Foster, guidance counselor at Nantucket High School, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to speak and introduced her colleagues, Julia Chumak and Chris Miemiec. She provided a summary of key activities and statistics for the school year, focusing on initiatives to increase individual attention for students. Mrs. Foster highlighted that out of 124 seniors, 70% applied to colleges, with the remaining students opting for the workforce or other pursuits. Detailed statistics were provided: 33% of college-bound seniors are attending in-state four-year colleges, 54% out-of-state, 7.9% two-year in-state colleges, 1.6% two-year out-of-state colleges, and 3.2% other post-secondary institutions, including post-graduate programs. She emphasized collaboration with the Wellness Department, which included classroom sessions on social media safety, decision-making, goal setting, and communication for freshmen. Mrs. Foster noted the success of the grade-level seminars, which adapt annually based on feedback. Special attention was given to juniors, ensuring they received guidance and a summer to-do list to prepare for their senior year. The dual enrollment program with Cape Cod Community College was also highlighted, allowing juniors and seniors to earn college credits for free, thanks to grant funding. This year, 21 students participated in this program. Additionally, Foster detailed the "Take Your Dreams Across the Sound" program, which involves visits to universities. This year, 50 sophomores visited Providence College, and seniors were given the opportunity to tour UMass Boston, Bridgewater State, UMass Amherst, and URI, with any remaining spaces opened to interested juniors. She discussed efforts to support ESL students, including tailored lessons and guidance on college applications. She highlighted the involvement of Mrs. Chumak, who shared her personal journey from Cape Cod Community College to achieving her bachelor's and master's degrees. The goal was to ensure ESL students understood that college is attainable and to provide them with practical steps to pursue higher education. In conclusion, Mrs. Foster reiterated the busy but rewarding year, summarizing the numerous initiatives undertaken to support the students' academic and personal growth.

Mrs. Martinez asked if any of the counselors were bilingual. Mrs. Foster replied yes Mr. Miemiec and Mrs. Chumak.

Mrs. Martinez also asked if there was data for demographics on race as to who is not going to college. Mrs. Foster said she would get that information to the committee.

Mrs. Martinez asked if any student could apply to Cape Cod Community College regardless of their immigration status. Mrs. Chumak confirmed they could. She explained that this year, the guidance team asked students directly about their needs and focused on financial aid information. Many students plan to work immediately after graduation but hope to attend college later. The counselors introduced steps for college applications and emphasized ongoing support, even after students graduate. Mrs. Chumak highlighted the importance of college campus visits to set realistic expectations and prepare students for future academic success. The program was praised for its positive impact on student preparedness and aspirations.

Mrs. Gallagher-Byrne asked about adding UNH to the visit. Mrs. Foster explained that it was absolutely on the list, it comes down to if they can do it in a day.

#### **3rd Quarter Budget Update/Audit Report, and Food Service Update - Martin Anguelov, Nantucket Public Schools Chief Financial Officer**

Martin Anguelov, Chief Financial Officer, provided a summary of the financial status for the third quarter. The school's expenditures increased by \$2.5 million compared to the previous year, with 70% of the

budget already spent, similar to last year's 69%. Payroll expenses increased by \$1.486 million due to new teacher contracts and market adjustments. Out-of-district tuition costs rose by \$743,000 due to higher tuition rates, with some expenses reaching up to \$330,000.

Professional development costs also increased by nearly \$100,000 due to the introduction of a new curriculum. Additionally, software and hardware expenses rose by \$120,000, partly due to replacing a switch and purchasing a new firewall and backup system following a cyber attack. The Community School saw a revenue increase of \$225,000, driven by new programs and higher participation. The town's funding subsidy increased from \$550,000 to \$600,000 to cover medical insurance costs for Community School employees. The school lunch program faced a deficit of \$65,000, attributed to timing differences in state reimbursements. Massachusetts' commitment to universal free lunch has led to concerns about future funding gaps, but current reimbursements are being maintained at the full rate. Overall, the financial situation reflects increased spending in various areas, with measures in place to address ongoing and future financial needs.

With no questions, Mrs. Proch commended Martin for his meticulous record-keeping.

### **Wellness Committee Update - Michael Horton, CPS Principal, and Meredith Lepore, NES School Nurse**

Michael Horton, Principal of Cyrus Pierce Middle School, and Meri Lepore, NES school nurse, presented an update on the district wellness policy to the School Committee. They co-chaired the District Wellness Committee, which included school nurses, wellness teachers, and school counselors from all four buildings, to revise the policy over the past year. After an in-depth review with a state-provided wellness coach, the committee proposed several updates and reorganizations to align better with state assessments and USDA standards. Key revisions in the policy include maintaining compliance with nutrition and school meal programs, ensuring adherence to physical education and activity requirements, and addressing new Massachusetts state wellness standards. A new section on social-emotional learning was introduced, reflecting its increasing importance. Mr. Horton highlighted the need for an annual compliance report by the School Wellness Advisory Committee (SWAC), which must meet four times per year and publish findings publicly. Specific concerns raised included the prohibition of distributing non-compliant food items, like cupcakes and sodas, within classrooms, aligning with state regulations. The committee's proposal emphasized the importance of these updates for ensuring the district's wellness policies are current and effective. Meri Lepore then addressed the significant issue of childhood obesity and related health concerns, including allergies and the distribution of sugary treats in schools. She suggested alternative celebratory activities, such as allowing students to choose classroom activities or donating books instead of bringing treats. Ms. Lepore also advocated for more recess, emphasizing its benefits for both physical health and social-emotional development. She acknowledged her own past contributions to the issue by bringing treats but stressed the importance of promoting healthier choices among students to prevent long-term health issues like type 2 diabetes. She then discussed the district's compliance with wellness policies, noting the importance of transparency and public posting of wellness committee activities. She mentioned the addition of social-emotional learning (SEL) language to the wellness policy and stressed the need to adhere to state regulations prohibiting the sale or distribution of sweets during school hours, except after the 30-minute post-school period. Mrs. Lepore highlighted the district's recognition at a wellness conference, where they received an award for updating their wellness policy. She concluded by raising concerns about the number of children failing vision exams, particularly in the younger grades, with many requiring glasses. Mrs. Lepore explained that excessive screen time is altering the shape of children's eyes, increasing the risk of retinal detachment. She emphasized the need to reduce screen time and increase physical activity, especially for younger students, to mitigate these issues. Mrs. Lepore plans to present detailed data on this matter in the fall.

The committee agreed they would like to see the data. Mrs. Gallagher Byrne agreed with more outside time for students. The School Committee will review these changes before an official vote. Mr. Horton asked if the committee plans to increase or change the number of required minutes for activities, suggesting that any such changes should be coordinated with the administrative teams due to potential

staffing implications.

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

Vote to approve the April 23, 2024 School Committee Workshop Minutes. *Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve, seconded by Esmeralda Martinez, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved*

Vote to approve the donation from Nantucket Education Trust to Nantucket Intermediate School, Grade 5 field trip to Camp Bournedale for \$6,000.00. *Laura Gallagher Byrne made a motion to approve, seconded by Timothy Lepore, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved*

Vote to approve the grant from Project Lead the Way to CPS for \$9,750.00. *Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve, seconded by Esmeralda Martinez, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved*

Vote to approve the grant from Project Lead the Way to NHS for \$18,900.00. *Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve, seconded by Esmeralda Martinez, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved*

Vote to approve NPS Crisis Protocol for Loss of a Student or Staff Member. *Laura Gallagher made a motion to approve, seconded by Timothy Lepore, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved*

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

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

Dr. Lepore reported that Facilities and Grounds negotiations are moving forward.

Mrs. Gallagher Byrne has an upcoming Cape Cod collaborative meeting tomorrow evening.

Mrs. Proch acknowledged the passing of Steve Sortevik, a fellow School Committee member. She highlighted his long tenure as a history teacher at CPS and his dedicated service on the School Committee after retirement. Mrs. Proch expressed deep sadness at the news, noting Steve's ability to bring lively conversation and unmatched enthusiasm and passion for advocating for students. She stated that he would be greatly missed.

**Agenda for the next meeting, June 4, 2024** - Enrollment, Recruitment and Hiring Update, Appointment of Clerk, Year End Utilities Usage, Facilities Update, Tech Annual Update, NET Update, NHS Student Presentations

Motion to adjourn at 7:16 PM by Timothy Lepore, seconded by Laura Gallagher Byrne, with none opposed, the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,  
Katie Bedell  
School Committee Clerk