

**Nantucket School Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
October 1, 2024**

Present Members: Chair Pauline Proch, Laura Gallagher-Byrne, Timothy Lepore, and Shantaw Bloise-Murphy. 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 October 1, 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 Shantaw Bloise-Murphy and approved unanimously.

**Public Comment**

Committee member Laura Gallagher Byrne read the following letter on behalf of Sarah Ray who could not be at the meeting.

Please join us for a special meeting of our PTO - October 2, 6pm in the CPS Cafeteria. The Nantucket Parent/Teacher Organization needs membership. Please come if you have ever thought about getting involved. The PTO provides much needed funding and support to our teachers and kids. Translators in both Portuguese and Spanish will be at the meeting. Historically, the PTO has held fundraisers to provide things like: gap funding for teachers to purchase supplies for their classrooms that are not covered by the budget, extra curricular scholarships for any student who applies, scholarships for graduating students...and many, many more things. This organization has existed for 44 years and needs community involvement now more than ever. Let's do what we do in Nantucket and show up for our community. Can't make it to the meeting? Login with Google Meet <https://meet.google.com/btx-defn-nsr>

**Superintendent's Update**

Chair Pauline Proch read through Superintendent Hallett's report.

October enrollment update, noting that the district currently has 1,722 students, a decrease of 9 from September's enrollment of 1,733. The breakdown shows NES increased by 4 students, NIS decreased by 2, CPS by 3, and NHS by 8. Enrollment shifts in the first month are attributed to students who register but do not attend.

Regarding ArxEd, the district is now using this platform for all mandated training. ArxEd streamlines the process, allowing employees to complete training quickly, with sessions that are concise and visually engaging. Required trainings include topics such as Title IX, Bullying Prevention, Section 504, and more. Coaches have their own tailored training suite. As of this week, 51% of school employees have completed their training, 2% are still in progress, and 47% have not started. The training deadline has been extended by two weeks. On E-Bike safety, NHS has had 31 students complete the Bike Safety Course, with 4 officially meeting all requirements. More sessions are being planned during after-school hours and Advisory periods. New permit stickers are still pending delivery, and additional bike racks are being procured and relocated. At CPS, 26 middle school students have registered for the Bike Safety Class, and a combined class with NHS is being planned for new E-bike students. Spirit Week and Homecoming were a success across the district. The Bonfire and Pig Roast were well-attended, and the Seniors won both the Hallway Decorating Contest and the float competition. Maddie Lombardi and Seren Cristler were crowned Homecoming Royalty. Despite losses by the football, girls' soccer, and volleyball teams, field hockey and boys' soccer teams secured wins, along with JV counterparts. Superintendent Hallett thanked NHS and CPS administration for their contributions to the E-Bike program and Homecoming events.

Mrs. Proch introduced the student school committee representatives Nora Sullivan & Cecilia Wendelken

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

## **School Resource Officer Presentation - Officer Cassandra Thompson**

Officer Cassie Thompson, School Resource Officer for the district for the past nine years, provided an overview of her role and responsibilities during her presentation. She highlighted her personal connection to the district, noting that her children are students, and her significant other works at the high school, emphasizing the importance of school safety to her. She outlined her typical workday, which includes assisting with morning and afternoon traffic, teaching a criminal justice elective to juniors and seniors, conducting school patrols, and consulting with support staff on student concerns. She actively participates in various district events, including lockdown training for staff, career fairs, and assisting with emergency responses in coordination with the fire department. Officer Thompson participates in several extracurricular activities, such as organizing Halloween safety bags, conducting bike safety lessons for younger students, and speaking in health classes about topics like internet safety and alcohol awareness. She also oversees camera maintenance and collaborates with private schools as needed. Officer Thompson highlighted the growing focus on e-bike safety, noting her involvement in teaching safety classes to both middle and high school students. She also discussed the distribution of bike helmets and locks, which the Sheriff's Department provides. She noted that Nantucket Intermediate School (NIS) has already distributed around two dozen helmets, while Nantucket Elementary School (NES) has a stockpile of helmets. She emphasized the challenge of getting older students to consistently wear helmets, pointing out that parental enforcement is key. While the school district and police department promote helmet use, compliance often depends on parents. She mentioned that some students in the e-bike safety classes shared personal experiences, including accidents, which motivated them to start wearing helmets, though many others remain resistant. She praised students for their improved adherence to bike parking regulations and for following new guidance. She shared photos from various school events, including her participation in "Touch a Truck" and prom, and noted the main changes to her presentation from last year is her focus on e-bike safety and her decision to retire from coaching girls' hockey. She invited questions.

Dr. Lepore inquired about Officer Thompson's involvement with the police station. Officer Thompson explained that she attends the police department's daily briefings each morning at 7:00 a.m. This allows her to stay informed about any incidents from the previous night, especially those involving students or their families. By being aware of such situations, Officer Thompson can provide context and support if a student is having a difficult day at school, helping staff offer additional care and attention when needed.

Mrs. Bloise-Murphy asked Officer Thompson about the biggest issues currently facing the schools. Officer Thompson identified traffic and e-bikes as primary concerns, specifically mentioning the problem of people dropping children off on the road, which creates safety hazards. She also noted that while vaping is still present, it is not as widespread as it has been in the past.

Mrs. Bloise-Murphy asked about students adjusting back into the classroom from COVID and if any residual effects. Officer Thompson responded not many and highlighted the district's success in mental health training.

Committee member Mrs. Gallagher Byrne inquired about the possibility of adding a School Resource Officer (SRO) and mentioned the de-escalation of vandalism from last year. Officer Thompson responded that, if staffing allows, there is someone nearly fully trained and ready as an additional SRO.

Student representative Ms. Wendelkin commented on the vandalism of last year and how students got annoyed with the vandalism and thanked Officer Thompson.

## **Nantucket High School Handbook - Tracy Mailloux & Jennifer Psaradelis, NHS Assistant Principals**

NHS Assistant Principals Tracy Mailloux and Jennifer Psaradelis presented updates on the school handbook. This year focused on language clean-up and clarifications, building on last year's switch to a chapter format.

Key updates include:

- **Attendance Policy (Chapter 3):** Revised to include a rationale on the importance of attendance, with clearer procedures and earlier parent notifications. The "Keep Them Coming" program was added, developed in collaboration with Officer Thompson and the District Attorney's Office, focusing on restorative practices. Clarifications were made on filing CRA (Child Requiring Assistance) petitions and 51A reports for students needing extra support.

- **Cell Phone Policy:** Now referred to as "Mobile Technology" to include devices like Smartwatches and earbuds. Cell phones must be powered off and stored during instructional time, with access allowed during transitions and lunch.
- **Other Updates:** Added assistant principal involvement in attendance reviews, revised dismissal policies for students 18 or older, aligned with the athletic handbook, and updated the glossary for terms related to chronic absenteeism.
- **SAVE Program:** A substance, alcohol, and vaping education program for students caught with prohibited items, offering restorative measures alongside disciplinary actions. Parents can also refer students to the program for education, even if no infraction has occurred. The seven-session program is run by Elyse Norton and Alan Traviglione.

Committee member Bloise-Murphy raised a question about the changes to the dress code. She expressed concern about some of the clothing students wear and questioned whether the enforcement of the dress code is equitable between boys and girls. She asked if efforts are being made to ensure that both boys and girls are being addressed equally when enforcing the dress code.

Ms. Mailloux shared that over the past 20 days, she has personally addressed dress code concerns with both boys and girls, providing redirections and reminders. She noted that students have generally been responsive to these discussions. Additionally, she mentioned that some changes to the dress code were made based on parent feedback from the previous year. Ms. Psaradelis emphasized that the approach to addressing dress code violations is educational rather than punitive. The focus is on restorative practices that help students understand the reasons behind the rules and make better decisions. She noted the importance of being mindful of gender and racial inequities to avoid inadvertently targeting specific groups of students, particularly since the dress code can vary in interpretation.

Mrs. Gallagher Byrne asked what happens if a student doesn't attend all 7 SAVE sessions.

Ms. Psaradelis explained students will not receive a certificate. She emphasized that the educational aspect of the program is valued, and if students do not complete it, they may face additional consequences or alternative measures.

Chair Proch asked about a program for students to go off-island.

Ms. Psaradelis responded it is the PASS program, which takes place on the Cape, offers an alternative to traditional in-school or out-of-school suspension. Students can attend this program for various infractions, including attendance issues, potential substance use, and school avoidance. The duration of the program typically lasts from three to five days.

Dr. Lepore commented he still feels hats and hoodies are inappropriate to wear indoors. Then asked if extra time is needed for students to get their phones from caddies. Student representative Ms. Wendelken responded class usually ends a few minutes early and there is enough time to gather items. She usually waits but noted it doesn't feel chaotic.

### **FY26 Budget Planning Calendar - Martin Anguelov, CFO**

Mr. Anguelov presented the FY26 budget planning calendar, noting that the budget process began in September. He received an email from the town in August requesting a roll-forward projection for the select board's preliminary forecast on revenues and expenses. The budget was sent to individual departments and schools on September 20, primarily reflecting salary increases in line with existing personnel contracts. The operating budget remains mostly unchanged, though the town has been asked to include a previous one-time expense increase of \$400,000.

Mr. Anguelov mentioned a scheduled meeting with the town manager and finance director on November 5, which is an annual discussion about budgetary needs. He outlined previous meetings with the capital program committee, where requests totaling \$229,000 for FY26 were presented. These requests focus on safety and security improvements, such as upgrading the camera system, building improvements totaling \$450,000, \$69,000 for IT infrastructure improvements, and a \$270,000 request for a new elementary school vestibule.

The budget submission process is underway, with a deadline set for November 1. Initial responses have been received, and meetings are scheduled through November and December. The school committee will review the budget on January 7 and January 21, with the town's updates incorporated into the presentations.

The town meeting is scheduled for May 3, when the final budget vote will occur. An open budget hearing will be held in February for public inquiries, followed by a presentation to the finance committee. The community school is also involved in budget discussions, with initial meetings having taken place with its executive director and business manager.

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

Vote to approve funding from DESE to the NCS for High School Equivalency Testing for \$1000.00. *Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve, seconded by Laura Gallagher Byrne, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved unanimously*

Vote to approve the donation from Nantucket Triathlon Club to NCS, Family Swim for \$4,000.00. *Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve, seconded by Laura Gallagher Byrne, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved unanimously*

Vote to approve the donation from Nantucket Community Foundation to NCS to support Adult English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes for \$20,000.00. *Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve, seconded by Laura Gallagher Byrne, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved unanimously*

Vote to approve the donation from Nantucket Community Foundation to NCS to support Summer Boost for \$9,000.00. *Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve, seconded by Laura Gallagher Byrne, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved unanimously*

Vote to approve the donation of school supplies from St. Paul's Church with an estimated value of \$650.00 to NES and NIS. *Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve, seconded by Laura Gallagher Byrne, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved unanimously*

Vote to approve the 2024-2025 NHS Student Handbook, *Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve, seconded by Laura Gallagher Byrne, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved unanimously*

Vote to approve August 20, 2024 Meeting Minutes, *Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve, seconded by Laura Gallagher Byrne, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved unanimously*

Vote to approve September 3, 2024 Meeting Minutes, *Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve, seconded by Laura Gallagher Byrne, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved unanimously*

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

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

Mrs. Gallagher Byrne reported an upcoming Policy subcommittee meeting on Monday. Then informed the committee Cape Cod Collaborative has a new executive director as Paul Hilton is stepping down after 20 years.

Mrs. Bloise-Murphy reported DEI meeting Friday at 1:00.

### **Student School Committee Representatives - Nora Sullivan & Cecilia Wendelken**

Ms. Sullivan and Ms. Wendelken introduced themselves explaining they would be alternating meetings.

Ms. Sullivan spoke on the start of the school year, noting that it has been positive, with students busy engaging in sports and extracurricular activities while adjusting to their new classes and schedules. Initially, many students faced challenges navigating the new schedule and bell times, but they are gradually adapting. This change has been particularly tricky for seniors who are used to a consistent routine over the past three years.

Ms. Wendelken's report highlighted the recent homecoming events, which began with a successful homecoming dance on September 21, where approximately 140 tickets were sold, and attendance was strong. The representatives noted that while upperclassmen participated enthusiastically, they hope to encourage more underclassmen to join in the festivities in the future. Spirit week saw great participation, with themed days including Red, White, and Blue Day, Dress to Impress, Celebrity Cartoon Character Day, Color Wars, and Wear Pride Day. Hallway decorating added to the excitement, with each class showcasing unique themes: the freshmen chose "Surfs Up," sophomores picked "Stranger Things," juniors went with "Peter Pan," and seniors opted for "Seniors in Seussland."

The pep rally and bonfire received positive feedback for their community spirit, and the homecoming parade featured floats from each grade.

Ms. Sullivan added the various clubs, including the Veritas Book Club, Diversity Club, and Quiz Bowl Club, have started to reassemble or form this year. A club fair held during advisory provided students with the opportunity to learn about and sign up for these clubs. The representatives concluded by mentioning that today was also "Pride Day," allowing students and staff to dress up and show their school spirit.

**Agenda for the next meeting, October 15, 2024 - Homeschooling Report, 2024-2025 School Improvement Plans, FY26 Calendar**

**Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn at 7:01 PM by Dr. Lepore, seconded by Laura Gallagher Byrne, and with no opposed, the motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Katie Bedell  
School Committee Clerk