

*Natick Public Schools  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
February 7, 2022*

The School Committee held a meeting on Monday, February 7, 2022 at 6:15pm via an in-person and virtual meeting. Chair McDonough called the meeting to order and took roll call at 6:21pm.

Members Present: Julie McDonough, Henry Haugland, Dr. Donna McKenzie, Catherine Brunell, Cathi Collins, Dr. Shai Fuxman,

Members Missing: Hayley Sonneborn – arrived at 6:26pm

Others Present:

Dr. Anna Nolin	Superintendent
Mr. Tim Luff	Assistant Superintendent
Dr. Peter Gray	Assistant Superintendent
Ms. Sue Balboni	Director of Teaching, Learning & Innovation
Ms. Rose McDermott	Executive Assistant/Recording Secretary
Mr. Jefferson Wood	Teacher Representative (remotely)

Chair McDonough moved for approval for the School Committee to enter into Executive Session for this purpose:

1. To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations or to conduct collective bargaining sessions with Cafeteria Employees - Local #1116, Administrative Assistants Union, EAN Unit A, EAN Unit B, Unit S and Title 1
2. To Conduct Strategy With Respect to Litigation, Specifically an Arbitration, Administrative Assistants, if an Open Meeting May Have a Detrimental Effect on the Litigating Position of the Public Body and the Chair so Declares;

Ms. Collins seconded. Chair McDonough called for a roll call vote. All in favor of entering into Executive Session for this purpose:

Dr. Fuxman – Yes

Mr. Haugland – Yes

Dr. McKenzie – Yes

Ms. Brunell – Yes

Ms. Collins - Yes

Chair McDonough – Yes

It was unanimously approved by a vote of those present 6-0-0.

Chair McDonough stated that the School Committee will be returning to open session at approximately 7:15pm. The School Committee proceeded to a private room to conduct this session.

At 7:28pm, the Committee returned to open session.

**Announcements:**

Dr. Nolin reminded the community that the Memorial Principal search is underway. The Natick High School Principal, Director of Social Emotional Learning and Equity as well as the Director of Security and Safety positions will be posted shortly.

### **Public Speak**

Chair McDonough asked if there was anyone present who wanted to participate in public speak. Mr. Domenico Manago of 3 Maple Street voiced his concerns regarding parents not being informed by the school district when children are having gender identity issues. Ms. Monica Petulla and Ms. Nina Petulla of 8 Moccasin Path, students at Natick High School, they recognized the gravity of the decisions that Dr. Nolin and The School Committee has had to make. They proposed changing the staff vaccination policy with an amendment. They requested that any staff that operate primarily outdoors, to provide regular testing as an alternative option to vaccination. Mr. Mark Sullivan of 11 Samuel Path voiced his support for a change to be made to mandatory vaccinations for staff. Due to the nature of a hybrid meeting, if any member of the public, attending the meeting virtually, wishes to take advantage of public speak, they email the School Committee Chair, Julie McDonough one hour prior to the start of the meeting. Chair McDonough then announces their name and they will be unmuted and prompted to turn on their video for their opportunity to share their remarks. Chair McDonough received an email from Kathryn Doran. Ms. Doran of 5 Point Street voiced her concern with multiple School Committee members overburdening the Administrators with requests for “prettier” formats for the budget presentations. Ms. Camille Napier-Bernstein, teacher with Natick Public Schools for 22 years. As a teacher, she spoke in defense of her English department. Comments made during School Committee meetings and elsewhere. Accusing their curriculum with ill-informed comments regarding rigor, has had a demoralizing effect on their department. She reminded the School Committee that none of the members have taught English in over a decade and have no idea how it has evolved. The English department welcomes constructive criticism from Curricular leaders but not from the School Committee. The School Committee’s role is not to dictate their curriculum.

### **Action Items**

1, Decommission of Furniture – Ms. Collins, moved to approve the decommissioning and surplusage of the following equipment, within the care, custody, and control of the Natick Public Schools, being no longer needed or useful to the Natick Public Schools, and to authorize the Town's Chief Procurement Officer to list such items as a lot on publicsuplus.com, in accordance with all applicable Town Policies. Ms. Brunell seconded. It was approved by a vote of 6-0-0. Ms. Sonneborn didn’t vote.

### **Consent Agenda**

1. Approval of Donations  
2. Approval of School Committee Minutes and Executive Session Minutes of December 20, 2021  
Ms. Brunell asked to pull the Executive Session minutes out of the Consent agenda. Ms. Collins moved approval of the Consent Agenda. Dr. Fuxman seconded. It was unanimously approved by a vote of those present 7-0-0. Chair McDonough brought forward the approval of the School Committee Minutes and Executive Session Minutes of December 20, 2021. Mr. Haugland moved approval. Dr. McKenzie seconded. It was approved by a vote of 5-1-0. Ms. Sonneborn didn’t vote. Ms. Brunell voted no and said she attended an open meeting training to refresh on rules and she learned that we cannot say a discussion ensued to detail something. Dr. McKenzie asked for a clarification of that comment from Mr. Luff. Chair McDonough will address it with Mr. Luff & Dr. Nolin

### **Recognition of Music Students**

Dr. Nolin welcomed Director of Music, Craig Chisholm and Band Director, Scott Morrill. Mr. Guadeau and Mr. Dupoe, Music Instructors. Forty-eight students in the NHS Music Department submitted virtual auditions for the Senior District Festival in early November. Auditioning for District festivals is a requirement for our Honors program and we feel it is a great experience for our students. They must prepare a solo on their instrument(s) of choice and perform scales. We are thrilled to announce that 31 students were accepted to the Senior District Festival: MMEA Eastern District Senior Festival: Dr. Nolin named all of the students. Mr. Chisholm also congratulated all of the students that auditioned.

At approximately, 7:53pm, Ms. Sonneborn left the meeting.

### **Demographic and Population Trends Presentation by Dr. Jerome McKibben**

Dr. Nolin welcomed Dr. McKibben. Dr. McKibben shared his insight on demographic trends in Natick and the implications for public education. The compositions of households are the dynamic you need to measure when you're looking at school districts. You must look at each individual area's own unique demographics and compositions. He reviewed macro trends and that some of those may apply but the issue is how prevalent is it? He reviewed trends in the under 18 years of age population. In the US and most states, the number of people under the age of 18 has declined. The primary reason is the consistent drop in the number of births from 2010 to 2020. The second factor is the slowing of the number of immigrants coming into the United States. The rate of the decline of under 18 populations in Massachusetts was greater than that of the U.S... Dr. McKibben reviewed race and ethnic composition as well as those changes in Natick from 2010-2020. A great deal of attention has been given to the significant decline in the number and proportion of people who listed their race as "White Only". The fastest growing single race category was Asian. The number of people who listed their race as "2 or more races" more than doubled in the US since 2010. Overlooked by many is the Census Bureau's change to the wording and structure of the race and ethnic question in the 2020 Census. The new wording changed how people answered.

Dr. McKibben stated that the number one variable for predicting future population and enrollment change is the age distribution of our population.

### **Testing Data Review: SAT, ACT, AP**

Mr. Brian Harrigan, Principal at Natick High School gave a presentation. Mr. Harrigan reviewed the class of 2021's SAT, ACT and AP test scores. He reviewed the updates to standardized testing and the upcoming changes to the SAT. He reviewed the percentage of students taking the tests and compared our SAP scores with other Massachusetts towns. Mr. Harrigan went on to review the total number of AP Students, the trend from 2017-2021 and their performance by subgroup. Overall, we believe AP's are important and would like new AP offerings, additional support for students in those classes and to recommend more students for AP and honors classes. He reviewed where high stakes tests fit into the college application process.

### **MSBA Statement of Interest: Motion Review**

Dr. Peter Gray reviewed the resolution that the Natick School Committee and the Selectboard must vote on and approve prior to the submission of our statement of interest. The language in the resolution is prescribed by the MSBA. It identifies a general description of what the school district feels are the educational deficiencies found in our buildings. It is an 8 step process, based on the statement of interest, determines what the best viable option is the school district. Dr. Gray reviewed the deficiencies and the priority categories for which our application may be submitted.

### **Update on Johnson Phasing Plan**

Dr. Nolin updated the Committee. She has hosted two public parent forums with families that are trying to decide what is best for their families. She and Ms. McDermott have met with approximately 65 families to answer questions and address questions. We did participate with the Johnson advisory group who are assisting with transition activities. Dr. Fuxman and Chair McDonough participated as School Committee members. Dr. Nolin reminded everyone to review the website with up-to-date information. The only program not being run at Johnson next year is kindergarten. There were only 15 incoming kindergarten students for the 2022/2023 school year at Johnson.

### **Teen Sleep and Start Time Working Group**

Chair McDonough discussed, as part of our strategic plan (physical health, mental health equity) this year, we are revisiting the working group. This group that had begun in the fall of 2019 and had met several times, but due to the pandemic, had to stop meeting. They will begin meeting again and there will be more to report in the future.

### **Member Concerns**

Dr. McKenzie reminded everyone that there will be a Policy Subcommittee meeting this coming Thursday. They have been inviting to their meetings, representatives of different faiths to share their celebrations and their holidays. The Coptic Leaders of St. Mark's Coptic Church, Father Samuel and Father Michael attended a meeting and offered their 14 classroom building to us, should we need it in an emergency. It was a beautiful gesture. Dr. McKenzie thanked all the leaders that came to speak with them.

Ms. Brunell read a statement. She felt she has no other option than to record our School Committee retreats or special meetings. She stated that she doesn't feel like she can speak freely in these meetings because she believes what she has or has not said is now being quoted in public documents, emails that become public documents. She feels the only way to move forward is to record the retreat meetings.

Mr. Tim Luff, Assistant Superintendent reminded everyone that the SEPAC meeting will have the Federation for Children will be doing a basic rights training for parents on Wednesday evening. This is for any parent with a child that has a disability or a suspected disability.

At approximately, 10:24pm, Ms. Collins moved to adjourn. Dr. McKenzie seconded. It was unanimously approved by those present 6-0-0.

Anna Nolin  
Superintendent  
Executive Secretary to the School Committee

Rose McDermott  
Executive Assistant/Recording Secretary

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Documents Provided in Novus Agenda** and materials used at this meeting:

Superintendent's Presentation

Dr. Jerome McKibben's Demographic and Population Trends Presentation

School Committee Minutes and Executive Session Minutes of December 20, 2021

Testing Data Review Presentation

Decommission of Furniture Memo

Donations Report

MSBA Statement of Interest Draft