

*Natick Public Schools
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
January 24, 2022*

The School Committee held a meeting on Monday, January 24, 2022 at 6:30pm via a virtual meeting. Chair McDonough called the meeting to order and took roll call at 6:36pm. All members stated they were participating remotely.

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

Members Missing: Cathi Collins – arrived at 6:41pm

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
Ms. Kyra Hacker Student Representative

Announcements

Dr. Shai Fuxman reminded the community about the SPARK Kindness event on February 3, 2022 LGBTQ Plus Basics and Beyond. It will equip participants with up-to-date vocabulary and discuss basic tools for effective alliance and more. Ms. Brunell announced the Town Library is launching a kid's survey for grades 6-12.

Public Speak

Chair McDonough did not receive any requests for Public Speak.

Consent Agenda

1. Approval of New Nurse Hires
2. Approval of School Committee Minutes of December 15, 2021 and Executive Session Minutes of December 15, 2021
3. Approval of Donations
4. Approval of Warrants

Mr. Haugland moved approval. Ms. Sonneborn seconded. Chair McDonough called for a roll call vote:

Dr. Fuxman – Yes

Mr. Haugland – Yes

Dr. McKenzie – Yes

Ms. Brunell – Yes

Ms. Collins – Yes

Ms. Sonneborn - Yes

Chair McDonough – Yes

It was unanimously approved by a vote of those present 7-0-0.

Recognition of Girl's Soccer Team Claiming the MA Division One Soccer Championship

Dr. Nolin began by congratulating the team. Natick High School Girls' Soccer is coached by David Wainwright, Kari-Ann Daley, Kayla Steeves and Kimberly Morrison. The captains are Kyra Hacker, our very own Student Representative to the School Committee, Briar Grady and Allison Jeter. The team won the Massachusetts Division 1 State Girls' Soccer Championship for the 2021 Fall Season. This is the first State Championship for the Girls' Soccer Team in school history. In the last 4 years (since the Fall Season of 2018 when this group of Seniors were 9th graders), the Girls' Soccer Program has had historic success. They were D1 State Finalists in 2018 losing in a penalty kick shootout (after playing 100 minutes of scoreless soccer v. Wachusett Regional HS). They were D1 South Finalists losing to eventual State Champions Bishop Feehan in the Fall of 2019. Last year - Fall of 2020 - because of Covid there was not a State Tournament. And this season they were 2021 State Champions. The team captured 3 Bay State League Titles during this time and numerous other accolades along the way. Dr. Nolin stated that the Natick High School and the Natick Public Schools are so proud of this team not just for their unparalleled success on the field but for the grace and sportsmanship in which they have carried themselves on and off the field.

Recognition of Students Receiving MASS Superintendents Award

Dr. Nolin explained that this award is to honor high school students who have distinguished themselves in the pursuit of excellence through the junior year of their high school experience. Dr. Nolin selected the award to be given to Monica and Nina Petulla. The twin students and their families were in attendance virtually and Dr. Nolin provided some wonderful things said by the school staff about them. Chair McDonough congratulated them on this amazing achievement.

Recognition of Students Receiving National School Development Council Awards

Dr. Nolin explained that The NSDC award is presented to high school seniors who have consistently pursued a high level of academic effort, and who have also served as positive role models for the student body. Recipients of the award exemplify admirable character and accomplishment. Dr. Nolin selected the award to be given to Eleftheria (Ellie) Pantekidis and Alicia Owens. Both students and their families were in attendance virtually and Dr. Nolin provided some wonderful things said by the school staff about them. Chair McDonough congratulated them on behalf of the School Committee. She also congratulated them on the work in the community and the impact they have made.

COVID Update

Dr. Nolin provided an update on the changes in the State from last week. The vaccination and infection data was updated. Dr. Nolin reviewed the quarantine guidelines for individuals exposed to COVID either in or out of school. This is the Public Health and Department of Public Health guidance. Dr. Nolin revealed that after December break we have safely reopened schools and are keeping students learning. We have done nothing but manage COVID. She discussed the challenges we are confronting. The Omicron variant has caused great concern; the surge in cases has impacted staff and student attendance across the district and will impact all aspects of the strategic plan: classroom instruction, school operations, and student learning. Another challenge is the rapidly changing quarantine and isolation rules and protocols that require constant updating and attention; often conflicting guidance from the CDC, MA DPH, and DESE complicates efforts. Dr. Nolin reviewed that pooled testing and test and stay are no longer effective in this phase of the Pandemic and why. DESE will provide antigen tests for students. For Natick, we recommend pooled testing and contact tracing to cease. The practice is too slow, state labs are overwhelmed and too staff heavy to continue. Logistics for the home antigen tests for students are to be determined. They are en route.

Overview of Proposed FY22 Technology Budget

Dr. Nolin introduced Dennis Roche, Director of Technology. Mr. Roche reviewed his budget request for FY23 and some standard reports he provides to the School Committee every year. He gave a summary of how our device counts have changed over time. He provided an analysis of inventory by location and an inventory summary by year purchased. Mr. Roche reviewed the following goals for FY23 tech budget:

- Provide incoming 5th and 9th graders with new Chromebooks.
- Replace and refresh obsolete teacher laptops.
- Replace and refresh obsolete devices at Elementary Schools.
- Replace inadequate free products that provide Endpoint Security (Anti-virus & Malware Protection) and Mobile Device Management (MDM)

Mr. Roche also provided an analysis of chrome devices and the ones that need to be retired. He completed his presentation by reviewing a summary of changes for each account.

Overview of Proposed FY23 Teaching, Learning & Innovation Budget

Ms. Sue Balboni, Director of Teaching, Learning and Innovation gave a presentation for the proposed budget. Ms. Balboni tied her budget back to our strategic plan and what our focus is which is on the academic and social development of our students. She reviewed the district goals; Profile of a Graduate Dismantle systemic barriers for equitable access to opportunities and social emotional learning and healthy living. Ms. Balboni reviewed instructional materials- expanding literacy centers and classroom libraries to provide students with rich and diverse texts that are accessible to all students. Digital tools to enhance learning at all levels. She continued by reviewing professional development opportunities for staff such as a TLI course, curriculum writing as well as testing and assessments. Ms. Balboni reviewed some RTI tools used for social and emotional learning.

Overview of Proposed FY23 Transportation Budget

Dr. Peter Gray gave a presentation of the proposed budget. Transportation contracts were renewed for three years beginning on July 1, 2021. We need to add two additional bus routes to address ridership issues at Kennedy Middle School and Johnson School. He gave a recap of the last few fiscal years. Dr. Gray reviewed all expected transportation costs and potential increases to the FY23 Budget request:

- Anticipated Fee Revenue increase to anticipated ridership returning to Pre COVID-19 levels for regular ed transportation: +\$135,000
- Two additional bus routes are added to address KMS and Johnson school needs: +\$146,520
- One bus route for Norfolk Agricultural student transportation: +\$73,260
- Awaiting final SPED transportation expenses from ACCEPT collaborative - \$ TBD
- 2% increase in Town Appropriation

Superintendent's DRAFT Budget Proposal FY 23

Dr. Nolin reviewed her budget recommendation as of today. She presented known costs that we know of as today. Dr. Nolin and Mr. Erricson will present to the Finance Committee tomorrow evening. There are a lot of unknowns or items that are in play right now. These are the known costs and mandatory positions that we must fill. She has listed all personnel asks into this budget. Dr. Nolin presented the backdrop for the FY23 budget. We are still in crisis management mode due to the pandemic. We continue to address academic and social emotional learning recovery from the pandemic. There are approximately 500 students on recovery plans (not at typical learning or stability levels). There's continued adaptation to COVID conditions--medical, facilities, staffing, state, local and federal changes to virus management. The potential structural deficit in FY24 A funding gap with prepayment of Out of District SPED and the inflation, supply chain issues, utility increases, etc. We are beginning Union negotiations with all 6 unions. The Retention of experienced teaching staff during the great resignation and COVID conditions mean that

staff have not been able to do recertification and lane changes at same pace as normal years, an influx of recertification will occur soon. Dr. Nolin revealed that in our district, 59% of staff are in years 11+ of teaching career (majority at 20+). Sadly, these are the very areas of our pay scale that have not kept pace with regional salaries. She provided a map of salary comparisons with “like” districts. Dr. Nolin completed her presentation with reviewing how the district is doing their part to add revenue:

FY21 Grants Written and Obtained by NPS Team \$3,453,585.50

FY22 Grants Written and Obtained by NPS Team \$1,609,897.00

These funds have helped us to address prior deficits and prepay special education costs, remediate student learning loss, pay for medical and health interventions and state mandates add and train staff to stabilize the district. However, we will phase out staff added to the recovery effort from grant funding. Student learning and emotional recovery may take longer than we have grant funding to address the needs.

Appoint School Committee Member to Memorial Principal Search Committee

Chair McDonough stated Ms. Brunell had emailed and indicated an interest. Chair McDonough and Ms. Collins both support Ms. Brunell representing the School Committee.

Member Concerns

Ms. Brunell discussed a communication plan to interact more with constituents. Two School Committee members will potentially meet with families virtually. We would like to pilot this to see if it is something we will want to cement into our Committee process.

At approximately, 9:22pm, Ms. Collins moved to adjourn. Ms. Brunell seconded. Chair McDonough called for a roll call vote:

Dr. Fuxman – Yes

Mr. Haugland – Yes

Dr. McKenzie – Yes

Ms. Brunell – Yes

Ms. Collins – Yes

Ms. Sonneborn - Yes

Chair McDonough – Yes

It was unanimously approved by a vote of those present 7-0-0.

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

School Committee Minutes of December 15, 2021 and Executive Session Minutes of December 15, 2021

Donations Report

Warrant Report

New Nurse Hires List

MSBA Statement of Interest Draft

FY23 Proposed budgets of Technology, Transportation and the Superintendent’s budget.