

*Natick Public Schools
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
April 26, 2021*

The School Committee held a meeting on Monday, April 26, 2021 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, Donna McKenzie, Catherine Brunell, Cathi Collins, Shai Fuxman, Hayley Sonneborn

Others Present:

Dr. Anna Nolin	Superintendent
Mr. Tim Luff	Assistant Superintendent
Kirk Downing	Assistant Superintendent
Dr. Peter Gray	Assistant Superintendent
Ms. Rose McDermott	Executive Assistant/Recording Secretary
Jefferson Wood	Teacher Representative
Kyra Hacker	Student Representative

Announcements

Dr. Nolin informed the School Committee that many grants have been written. We have been able to obtain two grants at a value of \$43,000 and we received some of the Student's Opportunity Act funds. Dr. Nolin welcomed everyone back and thanked teachers, administrators and colleagues for all of their hard work. There was great energy and happy kids today.

Public Speak

Due to the nature of a virtual meeting, the instructions from the Attorney General were to submit public remarks via email to Chair McDonough. Chair McDonough received an email from Ms. Kathryn Doran. Ms. Doran's email shared her thoughts about the April 13, 2021 School Committee meeting.

Consent Agenda

Approval of School Committee Meeting Minutes of March 15, 2021. Dr. Fuman motioned to approve the consent agenda. Ms. Collins seconded. Chair McDonough called for a roll call vote:

Dr. Fuxman – Yes

Mr. Haugland – Yes

Dr. McKenzie – Yes

Ms. Sonneborn - Yes

Ms. Collins – Yes

Ms. Brunell – Abstain

Chair McDonough - Yes

The motion passed by a vote of 6-0-1.

Action Items

Approval of the Last Day of School for the 2020-2021 School Year – Only two snow days were used. June 18, 2021 would be the last day and it will be a full day for Elementary and Middle Schools. It will be a half day for High School Students. Ms. Brunell motioned to approve the end of the school year on June 18th this year, June 18, 2021. Dr. Fuxman seconded. Chair McDonough called for a roll call vote:

Dr. Fuxman – Yes
Mr. Haugland – Yes
Dr. McKenzie – Yes
Ms. Sonneborn - Yes
Ms. Collins – Yes
Ms. Brunell – Yes
Chair McDonough - Yes

The motion passed by a vote of 7-0-0.

Town of Natick's 2020 Open Space and Recreation Plan

Marianne Iarossi, Town of Natick's Open Space Planner and Conservation Agent. Ms. Iarossi gave a presentation which reviewed the Town's updated Space and Recreation Plan. Ms. Iarossi reviewed the timeline. She reviewed some of the accomplishments since 2012. She went on to review their 5 goals and informed everyone on where to find their action plan on the Town's website. Ms. Iarossi took questions from members.

Special Education Financial Update - New/Move-In Students

Mr. Tim Luff, Assistant Superintendent gave a detailed report which included staff additions through the end of the school year due to move-ins. There were 49 new move-in students this year and 21 of them are high need program students. Mr. Luff answered all questions from the School Committee as well as questions from members of the public.

Review and Update on the Food Services and Transportation Contracts

Dr. Nolin gave the yearly update. Dr. Nolin reviewed the process of reviewing these contracts. There was a 4% increase of the transportation contract. The only bidder was Connolly. There were several bids for the food service contract. The evaluations of these bids were based on the criteria. Aramark continued to rank higher.

Discussion of Single District Virtual School Option for NPS

Dr. Nolin discussed the process for becoming a virtual school which involves applying to DESE. In a memo from DESE, she was informed that RLA will not be continuing. There are only two other virtual schools in our state for families who need virtual options. Tecca and Greenfield Academy are the state's virtual charter schools. Dr. Nolin stated that we would have to apply by May 6, 2021 and you have to survey the community prior to applying. If we want as many options for our students, we need to do it. We have no idea what next fall is going to look like. We also don't know what the criteria is going to be for students that will be allowed to be remote (high medical needs students). Dr. Nolin polled parents and reviewed those results. Dr. Nolin asked for the Committee's intention to move forward. Because at this time, our resources and capacity are stretched. However, we need a plan so that when the emergency order is lifted, we will be ready. There was very lengthy discussion regarding this option and the type of resources and cost as well as a lack of information from DESE. The consensus of the School Committee was for an application to be submitted to DESE.

Return to School Update

Dr. Nolin gave an update. The feedback from the elementary schools was exhausted students and staff. The middle schools opened today. She heard a lot about the traffic today. This is a new routine, new time, etc. and until routines are established, traffic is going to be worse for a bit. We are timing dismissal and arrivals. There's been some adjustments to the signal. We are watching traffic carefully on both campuses. The integration of the general education students being back with special education students went seamlessly. There were also very happy specialists at their buildings today!

Discussion and Review of School Choice Program

Dr. Nolin reviewed what the program and what the process is. The tuition reimbursement is only \$5,000. This does not cover what the actual tuition is. Students that are admitted stay in our district until they graduate. Our program has been closed for the last two years. The vote will occur at the next School Committee meeting. Mr. Downing reviewed what the impacts are for accepting students.

Update on Board of Health Mandate for Pooled Testing

Dr. Nolin reported that we have made a huge transition for pooled testing. Dr. Nolin reviewed the memo she wrote which included a timeline of actions and the results to date. Today, 451 students were swabbed. She thanked families for making a huge difference in our community due to signing their students up for testing. This program will be available through the summer and Beacon will continue to be the provider.

Subcommittee/Liaison Updates

Chair McDonough announced that we will be having a retreat in the next couple of weeks to see how we can function and work together better as well as revisiting our norms. She also provided updates to the liaison positions - Ms. Rasheedah Clayton - there's no need for a School Committee rep to METCO - it's not helpful to them. They have meetings once/twice per year and they invite School Committee members to attend. Dr. Nolin will alert all when those are scheduled. Ms. Brunell has agreed to become the third member of the policy subcommittee. Ms. Brunell provided an about a Day on the hill which she attended virtually. There's a statewide platform put across the state. Attending the meeting provided the opportunity to meet with state senators and representatives and provide local stories. She recommended that Natick be allies to the gateway communities. Ms. Brunell reported regarding ESSER's II and III funding. She discussed Chapter 70 and its importance. Dr. Fuxman announced a great program being collaborated on by SPARK Kindness and ELPAC. They are providing this event in Spanish with English translation. The program is called Have the Control of Your Life and Let Go of the Rest on Tuesday, May 11, 2021. He also gave an update regarding DESE's Dyslexic guidelines. This is creating conversations with us and in turn we will have those conversations with administration. Dr. Nolin announced a presentation on those guidelines at a future meeting

Member Concerns

Mr. Jefferson Wood, Teacher Representative commented on the return to school and the joy of being back with full classes. He reviewed the challenges of combining essentially two different classes as one. Despite all of the challenges, the care, consideration and professionalism is something to be very proud of. Vice Chair Collins reviewed the Administrative Assistants negotiating team composed of Mr. Haugland

Ms. Brunell address her concern regarding the School Committee email group which includes some members of the Administrative team. She doesn't support keeping the email group without notifying the public of all of the recipients of those emails. Mr. Luff noted that there is a policy that requires to have at least one Administrator on the group for archival purposes.

At approximately 9:40pm, Ms. Brunnell motioned to adjourn. Dr. McKenzie seconded. Chair McDonough called for a roll call vote:

Dr. Fuxman – Yes

Mr. Haugland – Yes

Dr. McKenzie – Yes

Ms. Collins – Yes

Ms. Brunell – 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
Special Education Presentation
Community Return to School Handbook
2020-2021 School Year Calendar Draft
School Committee Minutes of March 15, 2021
2020 Open Space & Recreation Plan
Pooled Testing Memo
Pooled Testing FAQs
School Choice Spreadsheet

School Committee Subcommittee Assignments