

*Natick Public Schools
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
May 24, 2021*

The School Committee held a meeting on Monday, May 24, 2021 at 6:30pm via a Virtual Meeting. Chair McDonough called the meeting to order and took roll call at 6:34pm. 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 (arrived at 6:44pm)
Kyra Hacker Student Representative

Announcements

Chair McDonough notified the community that Governor Baker would be ending the State of Emergency on June 15, 2021 and that we will not be able to meet remotely in the future. The Town is working on a remote option solution but the technology may take a bit longer than the next scheduled meeting.

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 no remarks via email.

Consent Agenda

Approval of School Committee Minutes of April 5, 2021: Ms. Collins moved to approve the consent agenda. 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.

Action Items

Approval of Revised 2021/2022 School Calendar: Mr. Haugland moved approval. 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

Update of Policy - EBCFA - Face Coverings: Dr. Fuxman motioned to update the Face Coverings Policy – EBCFA to be in compliance with the Governor’s latest mask guidance from May 17, 2021. Ms. Brunell seconded the motion. 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

Acceptance of Donations: Ms. Brunell motioned to accept the donations listed in the 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 – Yes
Chair McDonough - Yes
The motion passed by a vote of 7-0-0.

Introduction of Jodie Cohen, New Principal for Kennedy Middle School

Dr. Nolin introduced and welcomed Jodie Cohen to the district. Ms. Cohen gave a short biography of herself and informed the School Committee of the entry work she has begun to do. She officially begins her role on July 1, 2021.

Introduction of Bill Spratt, New Director of Facilities

Dr. Nolin introduced and welcomed Bill Spratt to the Town. Mr. Spratt shared with the Committee his background and experience. Chair McDonough welcomed him on behalf of the School Committee.

Introduction of Student Leaders at Natick High School

Dr. Nolin welcomed Mr. Brian Harrigan, Principal and the Student Leadership Class. They presented on the outcomes of study for their class. These 10 students (Bailey Gerson, Nora Elbasha, Ashna Hille, Fiona Ripp, Annika Sundsted, Nova Robbins, Jen Crisafulli, Kate Freitas, Christian Popp and T.J. Dalicandro) were selected on their vision and desire to change their school. They’ve met fully virtually, hybrid and one meeting where they were all together. The students shared their goals, improvements and moving forward. They reviewed the 9th grade orientation and mentorship, student engagement and feedback, inclusion and equity, projects for the future, senior year and future recommendations.

SIP and Achievement Update for Natick High School (Goals 1 and 2 Update)

Mr. Brian Harrigan, Principal reviewed his School Improvement Plan. In part of what he reviewed were goals, student engagement including student participation in extracurricular activities, student learning,

academic and executive functioning workshops, as well as grades, assessments and levels. Mr. Harrigan completed his presentation with the ways in which the high school is supporting students.

Dyslexia State Guidance and Natick Public Schools Overview

Dr. Nolin began the presentation by reviewing what the role of the School Committee and the process for sharing information with the School Committee prior to meetings. Dr. Nolin introduced the team who would be presenting along with her this evening – Kirk Downing, Assistant Superintendent, Tim Luff, Assistant Superintendent, - this guidance spans both of their departments. Also Holly McKean and Susan Kennedy, both Reading Specialists in our district assisted in presenting. Dr. Nolin noted that the Department of Education published this guidance on April 9, 2021. Dr. Nolin reviewed the response to intervention ecosystem and the purpose of the presentation. A review the most important pieces and purpose of the guidance which is to provide a set of screening guidelines for all students, including students demonstrating one or more potential signs of a neurological learning disability including, but not limited to, dyslexia; to provide a framework of intervention for students at risk of dyslexia and other learning difficulties that is timely and responsive; and to provide a comprehensive resource of evidence-based practices aimed at all educators to support students at risk of dyslexia and those identified as having dyslexia, consistent with and linked to other guidance from DESE. This presentation should be considered an initial review of the dyslexia guidance. Literacy audit updates were provided. Mr. Luff and Dr. Nolin will continue to meet with SEPAC regarding the implementation of the guidance. Meetings have been scheduled with families in our district who are post grade 3 to reflect on our services, screenings and processes. Research based screening tools that are used were reviewed as well as the grade level time frames for these screenings. Curriculum materials and resources were shared. How integrating screenings, interventions and progress monitoring within a multi-tiered systems support students at-risk for Dyslexia. Outcomes of data meetings and the child study process were reviewed. The district's next steps are to examine general education plans and special education services to continue to identify students possibly in need, to add Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN) Screener for all grade 2 students, DESE is not proscriptive about how to implement this advice, and we will continue to analyze our practice and come back to the community with how we have fully realized this guidance. An update to the strategic plan to modify practices to meet guidance PreK-12 (K-2 is primary focus for screening/intervention in the guidance). Chair McDonough thanked all the presenters for providing such a comprehensive presentation. During this presentation, at approximately 9:05PM, Ms. Sonneborn left the meeting.

Enrollment Report

Mr. Downing, Assistant Superintendent had provided a memo to the School Committee along with additional documents that included an analysis and enrollment estimates for the 2021/2022 school year. He informed the School Committee that we are appropriately staffed for the upcoming school year.

Review Proposed School Committee Meeting Calendar for 2021-2022

Ms. McDermott reviewed the proposed dates. Chair McDonough also recommended to consider retreat meetings as well. The School Committee will revisit this at the next meeting.

Subcommittee/Liaison Updates

Dr. McKenzie reminded everyone of the Policy Subcommittee coming up on Wednesday morning at 10:00am. This will be an in-person, live meeting in the third floor training room at the Town Hall. Ms. Collins announced that the monthly audit meeting didn't occur last week but has been rescheduled for this week. The Town-wide audit which includes the schools, is starting to wrap up.

Member Concerns

Mr. Jefferson Wood commented on going back to the beginning of the meeting. The sense of normalcy has been discussed and he wanted to remind everyone that staff are still working with masks, still shouting over air purifiers and only a few weeks away from having taught ½ of our classes per week and having created lesson plans for the other ½ of our classes for remote weeks. It has been a remarkable year and it speaks to our educators that we have been able to provide the level of normalcy. He informed the Committee that teacher appreciation week had already occurred, however, we should continue to support and reward the educators that make Natick such a great district.

At approximately 10:39pm, Ms. Brunell motioned to adjourn. Mr. Haugland seconded. Chair McDonough called for a roll call vote:

Dr. Fuxman – Yes

Mr. Haugland – Yes

Dr. McKenzie – Yes

Ms. Collins – Yes

Ms. Brunell – Yes

Chair McDonough – Yes

It was unanimously approved by a vote of 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

Special Education Presentation

Revised 2020-2021 School Year Calendar

School Committee Minutes of April 5, 2021

Updated Policy - EBCFA - Face Coverings

List of Donations

SIP and Achievement Update

Dyslexia State Guidance and Natick Public Schools Overview

Enrollment Report

Proposed School Committee Meeting Calendar for 2021-2022