

*Natick Public Schools
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
April 6, 2020*

The School Committee held a meeting on Monday, April 6, 2020 at 6:15 p.m. via a Virtual Meeting. Chair McDonough called the meeting to order and took roll call at 6:19 p.m.

Members Present: Julie McDonough, Haley Sonneborn, Henry Haugland, Shai Fuxman, Donna McKenzie, Matthew Brand and Cathi Collins

Others Present: Dr. Anna Nolin Superintendent
Mr. Tim Luff Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Kirk Downing Assistant Superintendent
Dr. Peter Gray Assistant Superintendent
Rose McDermott Executive Assistant/Recording Secretary
Mr. Jefferson Wood Teacher Representative

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 with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel; Administrative Assistants Union, EAN Unit A, EAN Unit B, Unit S and Non-Union Personnel: Director of Communications, Planning & Budget Analyst, Part Time Clerical, Tutors, Coaches, Instrumental Accompanists, Late Bus Coverage, Cafeteria Monitor, Substitute Coordinator, Permanent Substitute Teacher, PSAT Proctors and Floaters, On-Line Learning Coordinator, Wellness Center Supervisor, NHS Student Supervisor, Wall of Achievement Coordinators, Virtual Education Supervisor, FEIP & KEIP Tutors, All Central Office Administration, All Principals, Dean of Students, Nurse Leader, Director of Student Services, PIT Nurse, Nurse Assistant, Board Certified Behavior Analyst, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, ABA Technician, Certified Licensed Assistant, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent & School Committee; Administrative Assistant to Director of Human Resources, Substitutes for: Administrative Assistants, Teachers & Paraprofessionals, Long Term Teachers, Paraprofessionals & Nurses, Permanent Teacher Sub, Math Club Interventionist, Nurses, ABA Tech Sub, Long Term Title 1, Food Service, Mini University/Professional Development, Curriculum Writing, Instructors for graduate credits, Study Group Facilitator & Leader, Instructors for all workshops, all ASAP Staff, All Summer School staff, Metco Personnel - (Director & Academic Liaison) Instrumental Music Instructors, Grant & Self-Funding Positions: (Data Entry Clerk I Clerical, Technology Workshop Presenters, Summer Technology Training, Project Coordinator, BOKS Instructors), Technology: (Network Manager & Engineer, Deployment Specialist, Data Manager of C.A.S., Manager of Data, Quality and Controls, Data, Budget & Control Analyst, Help Desk Manager, Technicians, Intern) Mr. Brand 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. Sonneborn - Yes
Mr. Brand – Yes
Ms. Collins - Yes
Chair McDonough – Yes

It was unanimously approved by a vote of those present 7-0-0. Chair McDonough stated that the School Committee will be returning to open session at approximately 7:00p.m. The School Committee proceeded to a private virtual meeting to conduct this session.

At 7:36 p.m., the Committee returned to open session.

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 emails.

COVID-19 Closure and Employment Updates, Kennedy Middle School Update

Dr. Nolin gave a presentation addressing the items of the agenda and reminded everyone that this is a business meeting. All moves and attempts to speak run through the School Committee Chair. Dr. Nolin updated the community with the Memorandum of Understanding approved, with a unanimous vote, during executive session and agreed upon with our teacher's union. She discussed the undertaking this past week to negotiate a new agreement with all the unions. Dr. Nolin thanked the Educational Association of Natick for their partnership. We have such a strong working relationship with this team. Mr. Wood discussed seeing the benefits of the two teams working well together. It was very productive and efficient. There was a consistency for staff and students. The Memorandum of Understanding was fair and reasonable. Dr. Nolin gave an update on the Kennedy Middle School Project. She received an email wanting to know if procedures were in place to address social distancing at the job site. Yes, Dr. Nolin was happy to report that the Board of Health and the building inspector walked the site and Brait Builders has put in rigorous protection for workers. The project is still two and a half months ahead of schedule. We are ensuring that the correct practices are in place. Dr. Nolin confirmed that the spending freeze continues. She reviewed the analysis of the new federal legislation passed Friday 3/27/2020 which may impact the status of possible layoff/furlough of workers. Tier 2 of furloughs, the School Committee authorization to superintendent allowed all workers to be paid at least until 4/8/20. Dr. Nolin discussed trying to coordinate a response with our town partners for consistency town-wide in support of employees. She and Chair McDonough are having daily meetings with all town emergency planners (police, town, BOH, personnel board). This is a very hard time for all. Dr. Nolin gave a huge shout out to the NEF. The NEF board has voted to move forward with the NEF Hardship Fund initiative (name to be finalized). They are happy to provide the Natick community with the opportunity to help those in need from NPS. We will be working this week to finalize the processes we will need to manage donations and gifts. Dr. Nolin discussed requests from the community to provide donations. She reiterated that laptops and other donations cannot be accepted at this time per Board of Health and town counsel. Dr. Nolin reviewed the following communication procedures: Pandemic Response and Incident Command Communication, district principals have been limited from direct communication due to incident command structure. She revealed that they will return to a new weekly communication procedure for the district, streamlined based on parent feedback through Thoughtexchange and focus groups on April 10th, 2020. Moving forward there will be one blast per week. Dr. Nolin explained that elementary conferences and incoming kindergarten screening are postponed; elementary principals will come back to the community with a plan by April 17, 2020. Dr. Nolin discussed some guidance recently received from the Commissioner of Education surrounding contracts. The Commissioner's expectation is that we hold our contracts and ourselves accountable. We are being grouped with other districts with the same transportation contracts and we are negotiating together. Dr. Nolin reviewed ASAP tuitions, preschool tuitions, bus, enrichment, athletics and parking fees that have been paid and parents are asking for refunds. We will negotiate those once we know the length of closure and how this may effect families. Dr. Nolin thanked preschool families for the emails she has received. The expectation is for preschool teachers, in a developmentally appropriate way, provide resources as they are being provided to K-12 students. In keeping with the Commissioner's guidance. We are holding to the

contracts signed by preschool families. We understand we have never had this type of situation and if we don't continue to collect the contract funds, we will have to furlough or layoff the teachers which would then make us non-compliant for Special Needs students. Dr. Nolin reviewed how the preschool is self-funded. Dr. Nolin answered questions posed by preschool parents through the chat feature during the virtual meeting.

FY 21 Budget Update

At this time, we are recording FY20 expenses and time under COVID-19 emergency documentation. We cannot bill for Medicaid at this time. This will signify a loss of revenue. The Town Administrator, Ms. Malone, is asking for a 25% reduction in expenses. It is unclear if it's overall or local receipts. If the latter, 25% of 684,572 = \$171,143. The FY21 budget has to be approved by Town Meeting by June 30, 2020. However, it is unclear if this will be able to occur. Ms. Malone informed us that If Town Meeting is not held by June 30, 2020, FY21, we would start with 1/12 of the FY20 budget per month until approved. This will impact start of year. We may realize some savings this year which will fall to free cash and not be available to us for FY21: School districts under MGL have capacity to pre-pay tuitions and Out of District payments. An FY21 hiring freeze was suggested by the Town Administrator but it is too early to make that determination. Ms. Malone also a suggested reopening of contract negotiations with teachers, but it is too early to change the budget put forth last month. Our budget subcommittee will meet some time in the next few weeks to prepare.

Report on Remote Enrichment Program

Dr. Nolin reported that a long mailing went out to families to clarify expectations. The Commissioner of Education gave much guidance and the biggest was equity. We need to make sure that everyone has the materials they need to do the work. Our mobile technology team has been dropping off technology items in an effort to meet the expectation from the Commissioner. Dr. Nolin discussed the Natick Translation Team and all of their efforts. This has been a tremendous resource for parents. She thanked them for all they have done. Dr. Nolin discussed the survey sent to parents regarding April break. 80% of respondents would like to continue school through April break. The decision/vote for that will be next week. Dr. Nolin discussed the Commissioner's guidance because Natick's model was taken as a base in terms of how the Commissioner discussed his recommendations. His recommendations were:

- Districts and schools must continue to focus on the holistic needs of the educational community. This crisis disproportionately affects our most vulnerable students in terms of their physical and mental health, as well as academically. Equity needs to be a top consideration in local planning efforts, especially as districts and schools make plans to manage an extended closure.

At this time, districts and schools must also work to adopt a remote learning model:

Nothing can replace the in-person schooling experience, and we should not expect that remote learning can replicate the traditional school day.

- At the same time, with school closures now extended, districts, schools, and communities have an obligation to engage students in meaningful and productive learning opportunities through an appropriately structured educational program.
- Remote learning is not synonymous with online learning. Remote learning can take place in a multitude of ways

Recommended remote learning model:

- We recommend that districts support students to engage in meaningful and productive learning for approximately half the length of a regular school day. We expect this learning to take place via a combination of educator-directed learning and student self-directed learning.
- We strongly recommend that districts and schools focus on reinforcing skills already taught this school year and applying and deepening these skills.
- New content based in standards allowed

Components of a remote learning schedule:

- Opportunity to connect with one or more educators multiple times per week.
- Access to multiple hours per day of academic content directed by educators
- Time each day for physical activity
- Additional daily time for enrichment activities such as the arts

Feedback on student work and grading:

- To the extent practicable, teachers should provide feedback on student work completed at home. That said, if districts and schools have not already implemented policies regarding credit-bearing courses (determining credit for academic work at home), we strongly recommend that academic content be graded as “credit/no credit”

Dr. Nolin along with Mr. Tim Luff, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, also reviewed the guidance from DESE and where we are now:

What have we done:

- Special Education Resource Bank, Online Special Ed Live Sessions, Related Service Accessible Videos, Office Hours for Students and Parents

DESE Guidance

- FAPE = YES, BUT IT WILL LOOK DIFFERENT BASED ON CIRCUMSTANCES
 - Resources and Supports—Strategies, projects, packets, matched with ongoing communication.
 - Services and Instruction—Virtual, online, or telephonic instruction
 - Examples of services: sending resources and supports, services through video conferencing, and videos with accurate captioning
 - Educational opportunities to Gen Ed must be accessible
 - DESE is calling all educational opportunities special education services
 - Teams do not have to meet or create an IEP for special education services during school closure
 - Not replicating services from current IEPs, but maintain progress toward current goals.
 - Special education and related service providers will provide learning opportunities to students that will align with the services and goals within a students Individualized Education Program, to the extent feasible in the current environment.
 - Services provided and general progress will be communicated to parents on a regular basis via email, phone, or video chat.
 - Services, to the extent practicable, will be provided in an online and live modality which will be recorded to ensure access to each student scheduled for a particular session.
 - Documentation of services, communication, and student social media access will be kept by the provider.
 - All special education instruction and online materials will be held in a protected site such as Google Classroom, only accessible to students and staff assigned to such a class.
 - Many IEP meetings are on hold until May 4, 2020, with the exception of annual IEP team meetings that, in consultation with case managers and coordinators, may be held virtually.
 - There will be no complex meetings, nor initial or re-evaluations
 - Parent agreement and waivers of staff may be required with appropriate reports from staff prior

They went on to review our current enrichment strategy which is to reconnect with students, provide educational enrichment opportunities, grow previously taught skills and provide opportunities for students to get personal guidance through office hours. The review of goals for phase 2 of remote learning was discussed:

1. Strengthen our connection with students
2. Support each other as staff! Educator voice at the center.

3. Provide learning experiences that nurtures intellectual, artistic, musical, physical, and emotional skills and competencies
4. Build lessons that emphasize the most essential standards and curriculum themes as determined by curriculum leaders and school based PLC teams
5. Implement special education services

Dr. Nolin then provided a calendar of updates:

- Leveled Focus Group Department/Grade level leadership meetings 3/31/20
- EAN meeting on 4/1/20 to write MOU on updated remote learning expectations
- Advisement to all faculty and staff on 4/2/20, 3:30pm via streamyard
- Buildings open for material retrieval:
 - 4/3/20 (elementary) 9-10 last names A-L; 10-11 last names M-Z)
 - 4/6/20 (MS and HS) 9-10 last names A-L; 10-11 last names M-Z)
- Target start for remote program updates 4/7/2020
- Trainings for Google Classroom 4/6, 4/7 and 4/8 3:30pm (Tracy on 4/8 2pm, see prior email for info)
- Target start date 4/9/2020 Updated Special Education Remote Service Delivery
- Preparation for Remote Service Delivery on 4/7 and 4/8

Mr. Kirk Downing, Assistant Superintendent discussed the instructional model and how it works. The model is based upon the class chats and office hour chats. Each level has a different organic schedule in each building. Dr. Nolin went on to review the non-special education staff schedule, KEIP and FEIP schedules, elementary and middle school literacy and math specialist schedules and special educators/related service provider schedules. Mr. Luff reviewed how Special Education will begin and reviewed special educators/related service provider schedules. He informed the School Committee that letters will be sent home to families from their case manager indicating the services to be provided. He also reviewed the schedule for nurses, counselors and psychologists, Special Education paraprofessionals, behavior techs and BCBA's. Dr. Nolin continued by explaining what the administrative assistants are currently focusing on:

- Replicate the best you can work in the virtual sphere
- We will work with you to adapt
- Outreach to families (calls, etc.)
- Powerschool training!, stay tuned
- Thank you for all volunteering to assist

For those in Special Ed:

- IEP processing, scanning support
- Special education admin support
- Training will be provided

Dr. Nolin discussed the distance learning options and options to consider. She explained what parents may be seeing in their child's virtual classroom. She reviewed classroom chat expectations. She went on to discuss the next steps for our curriculum leadership and what they are being asked to do. She discussed assignments, assessments and grades for students as well as attendance. We are taking attendance and "credit" tracking for grades. We will be following up with families if students are not attending. Dr. Nolin reviewed our secured environments which meet the requirements of the data and privacy alliance for the sixteen towns around Metrowest Boston. Dr. Nolin answered questions posed by School Committee members and by community members.

Enrollment Update

Mr. Kirk Downing, Assistant Superintendent, reviewed the current enrollment number of students. We are currently up 4 students compared to last month. There have been many requests for online learning via school choice.

Consent Agenda

1. Approval of School Committee Minutes of March 9, 2020, School Committee Retreat Minutes of March 9, 2020, Joint Meeting With School Committee, Board of Health and Select Board Meeting Minutes of March 12, 2020.

Mr. Brand moved approval. Ms. Collins seconded. Chair McDonough called for a roll call vote:

Dr. McKenzie – Yes

Dr. Fuxman - Yes

Mr. Haugland – Yes

Mr. Brand – Yes

Ms. Collins – Yes

Ms. Sonneborn - Yes

Chair McDonough – Yes

It was unanimously approved by a vote of the seven members present 7-0-0.

Subcommittee/Liaison Updates

The FPC (financial planning committee) will be meeting on Thursday at 5:30p.m..

At approximately, 9:56pm, Ms. Collins moved to adjourn. Mr. Brand seconded. Chair McDonough called for a roll call vote:

Dr. McKenzie – Yes

Dr. Fuxman - Yes

Mr. Haugland – Yes

Mr. Brand – Yes

Ms. Collins – Yes

Ms. Sonneborn - Yes

Chair McDonough – Yes

It was unanimously approved by a vote of the seven members 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 can be found here: [Agenda & Materials](#)