

*Natick Public Schools
SCHOOL COMMITTEE RETREAT MEETING MINUTES
August 12, 2019*

The School Committee held a meeting on Monday, August 12, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. in the Training Room, 3rd floor Town Hall. Chair McDonough called the meeting to order and took roll call at 6:05 p.m.

Members Present: Julie McDonough
Matt Brand
Dr. Donna McKenzie
Henry Hoagland
Cathi Collins
Dr. Shai Fuxman

Others Present:	Dr. Anna Nolin	Superintendent
	Tim Luff	Assistant Superintendent
	Kirk Downing	Assistant Superintendent
	Karen Ghilani	Bennett Hemenway School Principal
	Susan Balboni	Memorial School Principal
	Andrew Zitoli	Kennedy Middle School Principal
	Teresa Carney	Wilson Middle School Principal
	Erin Miller	Director of Student Services
	Erica Cole Harms	Natick High School Vice Principal

Public Speak

Chair McDonough began with Public Speak. She asked if anyone was here for Public Speak. No one came forward.

Goal Workshop with Principals

Dr. Nolin reviewed the definitions surrounding the 5 year strategic plan: goal, objectives, success measures, strategies and goal 4 : Nurturing Connections was also included. This is not a conclusive discussion but we hope it will help with administrators retreat on Thursday and Friday of next week. Julie McDonough thanked the Principals for their participation and stated this had not been done before. The School Committee welcomes this opportunity. There was a discussion in regards to some concernCathi Collins that parents at both the middle and high school are not getting necessary communication or are receiving it in inconsistent ways. It is understood that some parents may start to lose connection with kids when they transition to middle school, and there are people who want more information to know how to transition Dr. Shai Fuxman believes this is not just what is the problem, but how to engage parents and take it to the next level, parents enjoy and attend Dr. Nolin's office hours. Mr. Andy Zitoli, Principal of Kennedy Middle School, agrees with the difficulty of the middle school transition, but we hit all the issues—RTI, LGBTQ, etc.—very hard. Dr.Nolin informed everyone that attendance at workshops with SPARK has gone down every year and that the Principals are the “secret sauce” for what might work. Principals spoke about how we need to help students own their assignments and not hold their hands too long. We need to give responsibility to the students. What info are they looking for? If parents need to know every assignment, etc. this is not a reasonable expectation, attendance at PTO meetings are really small—out of 20 people, half are board members. Dr.Nolin discussed what independence looks like at each level.

One of the Principals said the high school events are well attended but the events are targeted, as a parent I read everything on Twitter. Everyone should be on Twitter as it goes beyond social media and emails tend not be read. Theresa Carney, Principal of Wilson Middle School spoke to the transition of a parent's child and not knowing how to navigate that is what parents struggle with most, what is the most effective method? Most parents at middle school level want is help with raising their kids. Chair McDonough asked if we start with what people want to know and where they are getting their information. She suggested a survey to find out parents' needs and survey of teachers to find out what they need, communication at middle school is difficult and not sure parents know how to connect. Dr. Nolin said that Natick High Principal, Brian Harrigan, proposed that each school undertake a listening tour. Some other comments were made regarding parents that are invested but kids are overtaxed and so busy as are parents. Elise Gorseth, a parent attending the meeting asked to speak to this item. She conveyed that what is missing is parents conversation with teachers and how to foster conversations in middle school. Dr. Fuxman feels we need to be more creative and not think everything we are doing is not working. Chair McDonough wondered how to scale opportunities for parents to interact. Dr. Nolin conveyed on how to build resilient parents and that there are not as many opportunities. The School Committee believes it's time to go back to constituencies to learn, maybe do a survey. At approximately 7:18pm, Mr. Brand made a motion to adjourn. Cathi Collins seconded. It was unanimously approved by those present 6-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Donna McKenzie
School Committee Clerk

Documents Provided In Novus Agenda