

Natick Public Schools
SCHOOL COMMITTEE RETREAT MEETING MINUTES
December 19, 2022

The School Committee held a retreat meeting on Monday, December 19, 2022, at 6:00PM. in the School Committee Room, third floor, Town Hall. Chair Collins called the meeting to order and took roll call at 6:08PM.

Members Present: Cathi Collins, Elise Gorseth, Dr. Shai Fuxman, Catherine Brunell,
Members Missing: Ms. Julie McDonough (arrived at 8:21PM), Ms. Hayley Sonneborn (arrived at 6:19PM)
Members Remote: Dr. Donna McKenzie (stated she was participating remotely and alone)

Others Present:	Dr. Anna Nolin	Superintendent
	Mr. Tim Luff	Deputy Superintendent
	Dr. Peter Gray	Assistant Superintendent
	Ms. Sue Balboni	Director of Teaching, Learning & Innovation
	Ms. Rose McDermott	Recording Secretary
	Ms. Rasheedah Clayton	METCO Director
	Dr. Art Fergusson	Director of Social Emotion Learning & Equity

Chair Collins 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 or to conduct collective bargaining sessions (Administrative Assistants)
2. To conduct contract negotiations with nonunion personnel; (Superintendent)

Ms. Gorseth seconded. Chair Collins called for a roll call vote:

Dr. Fuxman – Yes

Dr. McKenzie – Yes

Ms. Brunell – Yes

Ms. Gorseth – Yes

Chair Collins – Yes

It was unanimously approved 5-0-0.

Chair Collins stated they would be returning to open session at 7:00pm.

The School Committee returned to open session at 8:00pm.

Public Speak

Chair Collins asked if anyone wished to come forward for Public Speak. No one came forward.

METCO Budget Discussion

Dr. Nolin provided background information regarding the program. Ms. Rasheedah Clayton, METCO Director spoke about expanding this program into K-4 for our elementary schools. We currently have 45

students enrolled from grades 5-12. She would like to enroll younger students. Last year DESE had offered us additional funding but because we didn't offer the program, they took it back. We have received increases every year. Ms. Clayton stated that if we move forward, we would be working with METCO headquarters to identify costs. In context, we along with Foxboro are the last two districts only to offer middle and high school programming. Everyone else has elementary enrollments. Dr. Nolin reviewed the previous audits done. The current equity strategic plan goals came out of these audits. The expectations are to diversify our staff, to work on collection and belonging. These students come in so late, they haven't formed the elementary bonding with Natick students. This is the third year we have raised this with the School Committee. We are leaving monies on the table. We are picking off the recommendations from those audits. Ms. Clayton said it's difficult to compare because the structures are different. We are a smaller program. There are only 2.5 staff members in the program. Another district one town over, on staff they have a director, admin assistant, social worker and three levels of supervision. We do a really good job with making sure our students have full access to all extracurricular activities. We value their participation here. Ms. Clayton is 10 years into this program. She started as a student. She went on to say, imagine how would it be if our students had the full experience, K-12? We are only giving them half the experience. We should give them the full Natick Public Schools experience. Dr. Art Fergusson, Director of Social Emotional Learning & Equity joined the conversation. He didn't understand why our METCO program didn't start earlier. When students come in during elementary school, they build all the foundations that they will need here. When they come in during Middle school, it is a double burden to manage it all. When he thinks about that demand, it's clearly not offering them equity and security and maximizing their potential. It's hard for him to understand why this hasn't happened. He believes equity audits are boiler plates. The next step is how do we take an equity mindset and develop the courage to address those issues. The challenges will be financial and political, and constituents aren't always aligned on the vision. How do we address threats to belonging. It becomes critical at a young age. They won't develop the awareness that their differences are not so fundamental. It's often times, the right ingredient that all students need to thrive. Research shows this interaction should happen very early. Dr. Nolin informed the Committee that they would like the decision prior to budget season. She believes that we can shoulder 5 classes of K at every school. We have never had that.

Ms. Julie McDonough arrived at 8:21pm.

Enrollment and Space Updates

Dr Nolin provided a simulation of enrollment. This was to demonstrate class sizes with a total transition of Johnson Elementary students. It is not a signal that the school is closing earlier than June 2025. Dr. Nolin provided the information should families decide to transition sooner than June 2025.

FY24 Budget Questions

Dr. Nolin stated that she had responded to all the School Committee members preliminary questions on the proposed FY24 budget and due to the late hour, there would be further discussions in upcoming meetings. This was the first of many reviews of the proposed budget.

At approximately 9:39pm, Ms. Brunell motioned to adjourn. Dr. Fuxman seconded. It was approved unanimously by those present 5-0-0.

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:
Enrollment Reports
FY24 Proposed Budget
Policies IMB-TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES/CONTROVERSIAL SPEAKERS, JJE-STUDENT FUND-
RAISING ACTIVITIES, ADF-WELLNESS POLICY, IHAM-HEALTH EDUCATION