

*Natick Public Schools
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
January 9, 2023*

The School Committee held a meeting on Monday, January 9, 2023, at 7:45pm via an in-person and virtual meeting. Chair Collins called the meeting to order and took roll call at 8:01pm.

Members Present: Dr. Donna McKenzie, Catherine Brunell, Chair Collins, Elise Gorseth, Dr. Shai Fuxman, Hayley Sonneborn

Members Missing: Julie McDonough (arrived at 8:11pm)

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| Others Present: | Dr. Anna Nolin | Superintendent |
| | Mr. Tim Luff | Assistant Superintendent |
| | Dr. Peter Gray | Assistant Superintendent |
| | Ms. Sue Balboni | Director of Teaching, Learning & Innovation |
| | Ms. Rose McDermott | Executive Assistant/Recording Secretary |
| | Ms. Beth Altchek | Teacher Representative (remotely) |

Public Speak

Chair Collins asked if there was anyone present who wanted to participate in public speak. There was no one in person and she did not receive any requests via email.

Representative Updates/Concerns

Ms. Altchek informed the Committee that they are back at it after vacation. They are all trying to stay healthy. It appears the adults are sicker than the children. We are trying to start the year off strong.

Subcommittee/Liaison Updates

PCC – Ms. Brunell gave an update for process they are taking on this spring. Next meeting is this Wednesday. Dr. Fergusson will be attending the meeting. They will be working on formation of the PCC equity working group. The School Committee proper piece won't be necessary until March. They will publish the dates in advance. We will have two members of the School Committee in the working group. There are five topic groups and School Committee members can sign up for one of them. There are multiple ways for School Committee members to become a part of the process.

Dr. McKenzie gave a short update on the Holiday Calendar and Homework Policy. The Subcommittee's recommendation is starting with the 2023-2024 school year. That they add Diwali and Eid ul Fitr as observed religious holidays in the NPS calendar. Another future action considered is changing Good Friday to a half day and adding a second half day for Orthodox Good Friday. They would like to look at how the future calendars can be adjusted. They want to explore our ASAP program being open, and Natick Rec and Parks open for families needing childcare on these days. We recommend the School Committee revisit this in 5 years while periodically reviewing the impact of this policy. The essential value of our district is the continued desire to honor belonging. Dr. McKenzie referred the public to documents being uploaded into Novus. These documents contain all the work/information gathered from the work the Policy Subcommittee has done.

Review and Approve Policy JKAA (Physical Restraint of Students)

Mr. Luff, Deputy Superintendent reviewed the minor policy changes. Changing him/her to themselves as well as adding a line that we do not inflict corporal punishment on students. These are MASC updates from 2021. We updated this because we had also updated our procedures which are about 8 pages long. We had reviewed this with the Policy Subcommittee. Ms. Miller is working with our staff to make sure they are up to date and trained on procedures that are in line with the law.

Action Items

Approval to Send Letter of Support for Dr. Easy and the Wayland School Committee.
Dr. McKenzie read a letter of support for Dr. Easy. The letter was to offer the School Committee's steadfast support. Dr. Fuxman motioned to approve the letter. Ms. Sonneborn seconded. It was unanimously approved by a vote of 7-0-0.

Warrant Review

Ms. Collins reviewed the warrants. She approved two accounts payable warrants that totaled \$795,943.19.

Consent Agenda

1. Approval of School Committee Minutes and Executive Session Minutes of November 21, 2022
2. Approval of Field Trip: Boston College Model UN Conference
3. Approval of Field Trip: 2023 CADCA Conference

Ms. Gorseth moved approval of the consent agenda. Chair Collins asked to move the field trips out of the consent agenda. Ms. Brunell seconded. For the remainder of the consent agenda – Dr. Fuxman motioned to approve the minutes. Dr. McKenzie seconded. It was unanimously approved by a vote of 7-0-0.

Approval of Field Trips – Chair Collins concern is that they are both overnight fieldtrips and she would like administration to express how equity is being ensured. She would like to understand and hopes that it's not only the students that can afford the trip are able to attend. Dr. Nolin reviewed that student clubs have always done fundraising. This is a given. Sometimes there are parental contributions and charity and scholarship funds. No child is turned away because they can't afford these trips. Dr. Fuxman is excited about the CADCA fieldtrip. This is an amazing conference. He is excited we have a group going. Chair Collins motioned to approve the field trip Boston College Model UN Conference and the 2023 CADCA Conference. Ms. Gorseth seconded. It was unanimously approved by a vote of 7-0-0.

The Addition of Towns to the ACCEPT Collaborative

Dr. Nolin reviewed what the collaborative is and how we all work together as towns to reduce costs. Wayland and Westborough Public Schools have requested to be added to the Collaborative. Westborough has submitted a request to participate in the Collaborative. There is no negative impact to Natick. The more towns in the Collaborative, the lower the costs for many of the shared services. The ACCEPT Board is in support of Westborough's participation. Dr. Nolin asked for a vote of their support. Dr. Fuxman motioned to accept Westborough into the ACCEPT Collaborative. Dr. McKenzie seconded. It was unanimously approved by a vote of 7-0-0.

Dr. Nolin reviewed and reminded the public about budget discussion framing points.

Overview of Proposed FY24 Special Education/Circuit Breaker Budget

Ms. Erin Miller, Director of Student Services gave a presentation. She reviewed the major factors in the Student Services Budget. She also reviewed some of the funding sources – operating budget, circuit breaker accounts, prepaying a portion of the out of district costs, the Preschool revolving account and federal grants. Ms. Miller went on to review some increases and decreases to her budget. Some increases

are home/hospital tutoring services, SEL screening tools and professional development that is mandated by DESE for a new IEP implementation. She reviewed out of district tuitions. There were 68 students this year that were placed out of district. There are multiple factors and one of them is that students may have acute needs that we cannot provide for them. There is a 14% tuition increase - inflation cost is being discussed. We must prepare for that. Ms. Miller reviewed the circuit breaker revolving account showing revenues and expenses. We had students move into Natick that required residential placements. Ms. Miller requested an additional \$643,090 for a total request of \$6,430,571 for FY24. She went on to review her staffing requests and some changes to staffing.

Overview of Proposed FY24 Teaching, Learning & Innovation Budget

Ms. Sue Balboni, Director of Teaching, Learning and Innovation presented her budget. She reviewed the math audit findings and the budget implications. We are currently in the second year of the audit. Potential anticipated budget implications have been added as a placeholder to the TLI budget in Instructional Materials as well as Professional Development. She reviewed the literacy audit findings and budget implications. She reminded everyone that the office of Digital learning falls under her budget. The FY24 budget requested is \$1,504,300.00 which has an increase of \$331,550.00.

Overview of Proposed FY24 Salary and Compensation

Dr. Peter Gray, Assistant Superintendent for Finance presented the budget. This is Dr. Gray's last budget presentation due to his retirement. He gave a short introduction of how he put together his compensation presentation. He reminded the Committee that it's only January and we still have a lot of unknowns when it comes to our revenues from the state. They are indicating additional funding, but this won't be known until it's a firm number. We haven't made any determinations on how we will use our circuit breaker funds until we have a clearer picture. He reviewed our salary base that were paid through June of 2022 and then looked at steps, COLAS and salary adjustments. We take the negotiated contract table, and we plug everyone into the new table where they would be on July 1, 2023. He reviewed a teaching summary analysis. Dr. Gray continued by reviewing what the additional costs of the new negotiated contracts for FY24 are. He reviewed how grant positions are determined as well as their costs. Dr. Gray reviewed staff additions and how they are determined. He reviewed how the retirements and turnovers are determined. He completed his presentation with a compensation summary as of today's date. Dr. Gray thanked his staff – Brian Lynch and Marie Vasselin. For the first time in many years, they have been able to provide answers in a prompt and timely manner. Ms. Erin Miller gave a shout out to Susan Grimner, her department's budget analyst who is retiring in a few weeks. She will be missed. Ms. McDonough asked about the Family Engagement Center. She feels that there's a need to help Rose McDermott. She was in on Friday to work on surveys, and she feels that there's a lot that we are trying to do in regards to registration in the central office. Can we do something to help with registration? Dr. Nolin believes at a minimum, we need a registrar. There are many things in flux. She appreciates that Ms. McDonough can see the reality. Chair Collins agrees because she was here one day and saw Ms. McDermott dealing with multiple families in the hallway. Ms. McDonough would be interested in seeing a proposal because it impacts the Superintendent's office and families.

Enrollment Update

Dr. Nolin informed the Committee that there were seven additional registrations. She reviewed the NESDEC enrollment report which predicts enrollment to drop 11% over the next 10 years. The report shows trends. Overall, the state is down in births.

At approximately, 10:25pm, Dr. Fuxman moved to adjourn. Ms. Sonneborn seconded. It was unanimously approved by a vote of 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

Letter in Support for Dr. Easy and the Wayland School Committee

School Committee Minutes and Executive Session Minutes of November 21, 2022

Boston College Model UN Conference Information

2023 CADCA Conference Information

Policy JKAA (Physical Restraint of Students)

Proposed FY24 Special Education/Circuit Breaker Budget

Proposed FY24 Teaching, Learning & Innovation Budget

Proposed FY24 Salary and Compensation

Enrollment Report

ACCEPT Collaborative Requests