

*Natick Public Schools
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
February 6, 2023*

The School Committee held a meeting on Monday, February 6, 2023, at 7:30 p.m. in the School Committee Room, third floor, Town Hall and via Zoom. Chair Collins called the meeting to order and took roll call at 7:49 pm.

Members Present: Cathi Collins, Elise Gorseth, Shai Fuxman, Donna McKenzie, Hayley Sonneborn, Julie McDonough

Members Missing: Catherine Brunell

Others Present:	Dr. Anna Nolin	Superintendent
	Mr. Tim Luff	Deputy Superintendent
	Ms. Sue Balboni	Director of Teaching, Learning & Innovation
	Ms. Rose McDermott	Recording Secretary
	Mr. Brian Lynch	Assistant Director of Finance
	Ms. Kari Anne Daley	Teacher Representative
	Ms. Inkyoung Lee	Student Representative

Announcements

Ms. Gorseth announced the Turkish embassy has put out a way to donate items. Dr. Nolin shared and congratulated the 9-5 musical that was student produced at Natick high school this past weekend. Really proud of the young women. Dr. Nolin also informed the Committee that she is very involved in stay interviews with our staff. She has had 20 meetings already and has many scheduled. She reminded everyone that February is black history month, and we will be publishing resources throughout newsletters. Dr. Fuxman reminded the public about tomorrow night's SPARK event.

Public Speak

No one appeared in person and no requests were made via email to Chair Collins.

Representative Updates/Concerns

Kari Anne Daley on behalf of the EAN, congratulated Dr. Nolin on becoming a finalist in Newton but how disappointed they are to have her leave.

Inkyoung Lee said she saw the 9-5 play. It was her first play in a long time, and she was impressed with how talented everyone was. They've started the student council flower drive. It's her favorite student council event.

Subcommittee/Liaison Updates

Ms. McDonough discussed the surveys created and sent out for the late start. The responses were great, 1600 responses from families and 600 responses from staff - had some aha moments. She thanked the committee that's been meeting every other week. Everyone's been working hard to discuss scheduling changes and it will all be included in the presentation to the School Committee. Next steps would be to bargain with our unions and then share with all.

First Reading of Policies (JHA Observances of Religious Holidays, IKB Homework Policy, IC/ICA School Year/School Calendar)

Mr. Luff, Deputy Superintendent gave a quick synopsis about the discussions. There were suggestions made to three policies. JHA policy was previously called student absences on religious holidays. The subcommittee discussed changing that to observances. The subcommittee discussed and talked about the school calendars. There's a similar policy for homework and the school year calendar. Making this clearer takes the burden off the student negotiating with the teacher regarding homework or test taking. There was a conversation about the School Committee taking the recommendations from Dr. Nolin and having those be the limit. Dr. Fuxman asked if it's possible to have a calendar with all the holidays but noted that they some aren't days off? It is possible. This is about the Superintendent recommending a calendar that has dates on there. This is about attending school and extracurricular activities. Students being excused for personal observances of religious holidays.

Discussion of Calendar, Religious Holidays

Dr. Nolin reviewed what the intention of this policy is and how the administration and governance worked together. We looked at best practices, trends, across the United States and across the world. She has put up a status quo calendar as if we had made no changes. She has also put forward a calendar that celebrates Diwali and Eid. She has listened to our families and students. This is a complex issue and there's not one right answer. Ms. McDonough reviewed a memo she had put together and would like to propose a community engagement process. Ms. Gorseth asked may we look at the type of observances, the priority people place on them, what they need from the school calendar, as well as values and priorities of our school calendar. We should have these community conversations and talk to people about options. We should also speak to more educators about this. Ms. McDonough also proposed some focus groups.

Warrant Review

Chair Collins signed a payroll warrant of \$2,750,015.96 and two accounts payable warrants totaling \$1,131,952.12.

Update from METCO Conference

Ms. Collins informed the Committee that last Friday, she, Ms. Sonneborn, Ms. Clayton, and Dr. Nolin attended the conference at Gillette stadium. There were fun things like time on the field but most of the day was working in the gray meaning there were no clear or easy answers. The sense of belonging, barriers, what needs to be overcome, METCO funding were all discussed. We receive about \$8,000 per student. Our new governor hasn't filed her new budget yet. METCO funding must be approved every year.

Update on District Happenings

Ms. Balboni obtained a grant for \$36,000.00 for high quality math materials. We participated in a collaborative grant as an incentive to our contracted company to purchase electric bussing. We are trying to work as a block. Mr. Spratt & Jillian Wilson-Martin have applied for a grant for a heat pump for Ben Hem. Dr. Nolin received a teacher diversification grant of \$23,769.00 to allow us to continue the work that we have been doing that have brought us additional staff of color. Really exciting and kudos to Dan Hennekemp, Science Department Head at NHS. He received a \$1,000,000.00 dollar grant for stem academy - early college classes - we are one of only a handful of districts that had been able to vie for this money. Out of Natick high school science, a project on a geodesic dome project, where they will try to approximate some aquaponics and outdoor growing at KMS. They will build, design and engineer this dome that students will help to build. Dr. Nolin has been meeting with a venture capitalist on artificial intelligence. They are back and speaking to us and about workforce development. They are going to start

with the Chiefs of Fire and Police. We are writing a grant for some security info, about \$150,000.00 of funds for cameras at Wilson, Ben Hem and Brown schools. Dr. Nolin and Dr. Fergusson are refreshing the strategic plan. They are developing a parent advisory and a student advisory. Dr. Nolin pointed to the evaluation that the strategic plan has been updated. She took the high impact artifacts the School Committee had mentioned and put it in that format. We are working on annual performance report and gearing up for the first State of the Union.

Update on Lilja Principal Search

There was a memo with an overview of the process. Dr. Nolin is pleased to say there was unanimity on how they wanted to approach it and affirming Dr. Shelby Marscher as the lead of the school.

Update on Natick High School Principal Search

Candidates for Principals are great and exciting. Ms. Sonneborn will be joining for the interviews. Shortly after that the Director of Finance and Director of Human Resources searches will ensue.

Update on ACCEPT Collaborative

Dr. Nolin informed the Committee that another district, Wayland Public Schools are asking to join the collaborative. At the next meeting we are going to vote on Wayland joining. Dr. Nolin had provided the information to the School Committee from Wayland. The more people in the collaborative, the more robust it is for us and keeps cost down.

Enrollment Update

Dr. Nolin didn't have much to report. There was a difference of 10 students from the last time. This is the time of year where families are traveling abroad and unenroll to homeschool.

FY24 Budget Overview and Presentation

Dr. Nolin informed the community that there was a great meeting last Wednesday, joint meeting with the Select Board and the Finance Committee. There have been no changes to the presentation. Mr. Lynch, Assistant Director of Business was in attendance to answer any questions. Dr. Nolin will add registration /registrar position to the budget for the next meeting. She reassured the School Committee that between circuit breaker surplus and the \$1,000,000.00 ARPA funds, we will have the capacity to add the positions. She will need to come back to the School Committee with field trip information and costs.

Consent Agenda

Approval of School Committee Retreat Meeting Minutes and School Committee Meeting Minutes of December 19, 2022 and Executive Session Minutes of December 19, 2022: Dr. Fuxman moved to approve the consent agenda. Dr. McKenzie seconded. It was unanimously approved 6-0-0.

Future Meeting Dates/Agenda Items

Chair Collins reminded members that there is a retreat next Monday.

At approximately 9:39pm, Dr. McKenzie motioned to adjourn. Ms. Sonneborn seconded. It was unanimously approved 6-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Anna Nolin
Superintendent
Executive Secretary to the School Committee

Attest: _____

Rose McDermott
Executive Assistant/Recording Secretary

Documents Provided in Novus Agenda and materials used at this meeting:

Superintendent's Presentation

Policies (JHA Observances of Religious Holidays, IKB Homework Policy, IC/ICA School Year/School Calendar)

Proposed School Year Calendars

School Committee Retreat Meeting Minutes and School Committee Meeting Minutes of December 19, 2022 and Executive Session Minutes of December 19, 2022

FY24 Budget Overview and Presentation

ACCEPT Collaborative Documents

Enrollment Report