

*Approval of Minutes
March 20, 2023*

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

The School Committee held a retreat meeting on Monday, February 6, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. in the School Committee Room, third floor, Town Hall. Chair Collins called the meeting to order and took roll call at 6:05 pm. Julie McDonough stated she was participating remotely.

Members Present: Cathi Collins, Elise Gorseth, Dr. Shai Fuxman, Dr. Donna McKenzie, Ms. Sonneborn, Julie McDonough (participated remotely)

Members missing: Catherine Brunell

Others present:	Dr. Anna Nolin	Superintendent
	Tim Luff	Deputy Superintendent
	Sue Balboni	Director of Teaching, Learning & Innovation
	Rose McDermott	Recording Secretary
	Brian Lynch	Assistant Director of Finance.

Chair Collins moved for approval for the School Committee to enter into Executive Session for this purpose:

1. To comply with or act under the authority of any general or special law, specifically Chapter 30A, Section 21(g)(1) The public body, or its chair or designee, shall, at reasonable intervals, review the minutes of executive sessions to determine if the provisions of this subsection warrant continued non-disclosure.

Dr. McKenzie seconded. Chair Collins called for a roll call vote:

Dr. Fuxman – Yes

Dr. McKenzie – Yes

Ms. Gorseth – Yes

Ms. Sonneborn – Yes

Ms. McDonough - Yes

Chair Collins – Yes

It was unanimously approved 6-0-0.

Ms. Collins stated the School Committee would return to open session at approximately 6:30PM.

The School Committee returned to open session at approximately 6:31pm.

Public Speak

There was no one in person requesting to speak.

Discussion of Intramural Athletics Programs

Dr. Nolin's understanding is that School Committee would like her to get numbers of how many kids try out for sports. Dr. Nolin asked what sports or like clubs, all sports and cost? The

Committee would like not just the tryout numbers but the number of students that do or don't make the team. They would like to know how much playing time each player is getting and an expansion or creation of an intramural program. Is it feasible for them to expand a team, to play a schedule? Dr. Nolin had asked MIAA teams to add an additional team. She said some is legislated by MIAA. Mr. Collins had said an issue is also the availability of the rinks/spaces where the team is playing. A member stated that Needham has A and B teams. Believes it may solve some of the issues in middle school by scaling MIAA sports or adding intramurals. Club teams use the senior center, community center. There are other places where kids can try out a sport. The AAU and/or soccer clubs for example. This would be a sense of belonging for our students that can't make the junior varsity or varsity team. It was asked if any teams where there weren't enough kids (tennis)? A lot of people that were on a team last year are choosing not to play this year - boys tennis for example. Dr. Nolin asked if they want her to explore other venues? Ms. Sonneborn said yes and that CYO basketball uses Wilson on the weekend. The members would be interested to know the feasibility of and what it would take to get a strong program up and running. They were also thinking they feel we have kids that drop out of sports because they don't make a team or even the club team. Not sure if Dr. Nolin can get that data.

Fee Adjustments for ASAP

Dr. Nolin met with Meghan Cap-Renzi, Director of ASAP today. She's also doing surveys and stay interviews with her staff. What barriers can we get rid of and what enhancements can we make? ASAP were the most staff to take a hit during COVID. She gave Ms. Cap-Renzi a lot of credit. The pay structure is an issue, the hours are an issue. They have early risers in the morning and then they go back in the afternoon. Dr. Nolin continued by stating that Ms. Cap-Renzi is coming to you with some funding models. She is also coming with an increase in fees. If we do remove early risers and then call their ASAP equivalents in at 10am and they become the cafe monitors, work where we need them at the elementary level. She will come to you with that fee structure. Preschool, music, sports, etc will be coming as well. She has been looking at the whole structure. Dr. Nolin asked the Committee what they needed? Ms. Sonneborn would like the historical (last 10 years) for fees for families. Dr. McKenzie asked about financial assistance? Are we upping it? She would like a report on that. Ms. Gorseth asked about morale issues? Staffing issues? Has turnover increased and to what extent? Dr. Nolin asked if they needed an overview of the services that ASAP provides. Chair Collins thinks it would be helpful to know. Which schools are we running and what goes on while kids are there? Dr. McKenzie wants an update on why we can't staff the program. Dr. Fuxman asked about the consistency of the program across the district. They do not want to work on holidays or on school days off. They also want to have a break during February and April. The same vacation the students receive. It's 12% of all the ASAP kids that go to the program during the vacation weeks. They are going to propose the same pay for two weeks less of work. However, ASAP doesn't meet the MetroWest standard of living wages. If we are going to keep the ASAP staff, we have to do better for them, by them. Mr. Luff asked that when we do this fee increase, do we want to bring any other fee increases? Summer program? Prek? Please consider this for the next meeting.

Update on Non-Represented Staff Salaries

Dr. Nolin informed the Committee that Suzanne Kenny is going to come to them with the non-represented schedule, there are some market adjustments needed. Two positions have come out of the Administrative Assistant's union. That will come when she does the yearly adjustments.

She will be providing the same document she has produced in the past. Maybe as soon as the next meeting.

FY24 Budget Discussion and Questions

Dr. Nolin thought the joint meeting last week was great. It went really well and there were lots of positive feedback from the Select Board and Finance Committee. But from here on out, it's just us internally and then it will go back to the Finance Committee. She asked the Committee what are the questions you have? The more we can get done, the less confusing it will be. The public hearing on our budget is March 6, 2023, and then we will vote it on March 20, 2023. Dr. Nolin asked Millie the CEO of METCO to come speak to the School Committee about the expansion, funding streams, etc. Dave Linsky, State Representative has been an incredible supporter and instrumental in the METCO program and its budget. Dr. Nolin and Ms. Rasheedah Clayton, METCO Director, have been in constant discussions with Millie. One of the things that we've heard about is a potential preschool pilot. If we want to open it to preschoolers, it's got to be free, but it can be funded by METCO. Dr. Nolin got us in the cue, but we can always withdraw.

Julie McDonough arrived in person at 7:07pm. She asked about 5 instructional technology staff requests; do we actually need five? She has a concern about possible higher numbers at elementary school and keeping teachers in obedience. Dr. Nolin reminded her about the \$1,000,000.00 in ARPA funding. We also need a registrar position. We also have the five library specialists that we've wanted for a long time. At Johnson there are two administrative assistants, one needs to move out of there. Two are no longer necessary. Dr. Nolin's suggestion is to take that position and make it a level 1. Ms. McDonough would like field trip documentation. What are the field trips and how much do they cost? She worries about the enrollment numbers. She wants to get a grasp on it. How do we get a handle on it? We had McKibbon come but is there any value to setting some money aside? Is there anything in the trends that we can see? Dr. Nolin had asked Jamie Errickson, Town Administrator about this and he said to look at the Municipal report that the town uses for municipal planning. The caveat there is that report was available during our rising tide. McKibbon said it all boils down to whether the retired folks roll their house over. I don't know how he gets that information. There was a chart about dwellings somewhere. Ms. Gorseth brought up the curriculum. Ms. Balboni reminded them of all the audits done recently and the curriculums in place.

Discuss Timing/Length of School Committee Meetings

Chair Collins heard from two members because starting at 6pm is difficult. She said the problem is our meetings run so long and if we continue the retreat beforehand, we must start this early. Also, talking about things twice, isn't a good thing. Dr. Nolin believes it's a lack of trust amongst the School Committee members that is the root cause. They don't trust each other. Is the need for televising what we need? Starting earlier doesn't mean we will end earlier. Dr. Fuxman would like concise conversations. Chair Collins said we will try to start at 6:30pm moving forward.

Discussion of Calendar, Religious Holidays and Homework Policy

Dr. Nolin informed the Committee that "she and Ms. McDonough have talked at length and there's no girl fight here." When smart, passionate people have conversation, this is what

happens. Dr. Nolin asked for everyone not to pretend we don't already have an established viewpoint. Dr. Nolin had brought forward two calendars earlier in the conversation. She needs to be able to explain that there's not only two options. Ms. McDonough is going to put forward yet another recommendation. Dr. McKenzie believes asking people about their religious practices is not a good idea. Dr. Nolin informed everyone that all these policies you're going to see tonight, they are going to go to impact bargaining. Dr. Nolin will have input from EAN. Once they see the calendar they will then decide.

At approximately 7:45pm, Dr. Fuxman motioned to adjourn the meeting. Dr. McKenzie seconded. It was approved unanimously by those present 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:

Proposed 2023-2024 School Calendar [one with new holidays](#) and [one without](#)
[DRAFT SOP document](#)
Policy Subcommittee Resources and Documentation