

**Nantucket School Committee
Meeting Minutes
October 8, 2025**

Present Members: Chair Laura Gallagher Byrne, Vice-Chair Shantaw Bloise-Murphy, Timothy Lepore, Esmeralda Martinez, and Superintendent Elizabeth Hallett

The October 8, 2025, School Committee meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM in the LGI by Chair Laura Gallagher Byrne. A motion was made by Timothy Lepore, seconded by Shantaw Bloise Murphy. The agenda was approved unanimously.

Announcement: this meeting is being audio and video recorded

Public Comment

Graham Veysey, parent, expressed concern that without reconsidering current plans, issues with athletic fields will persist. Noted frequent use of turf fields and increased injury risk on asphalt. Emphasized input from coaches, evolving technology, and the opportunity to build facilities that meet student and community needs. Requested formation of a working committee to collaborate with architects.

Kate Garrett, parent and ER nurse, highlighted that 73% of students participate in athletics. Raised concerns about shin splints and unsafe surfaces, noting that track and field athletes require spikes that are incompatible with asphalt. Pointed out existing facilities around the island and described current field conditions as uneven and outdated.

Hadley Dutra stressed the importance of reinstating the campus-wide master plan, noting that approved plans are not ADA compliant and may not pass future approvals without community involvement.

Dominic Pasys, student-athlete, commented that running on gravel is challenging but asphalt would be worse for athletes.

Corey Gammill, parent and coach, emphasized planning for long-term student use, noting inadequate practice facilities for multi-sport athletes. Applauded current student resourcefulness, suggested exploring more durable surfaces, and called for improvements to give children confidence and proper practice spaces.

Lisa Wisentaner, parent, spoke on behalf of track athletes, stating that an asphalt track would not be an upgrade. Urged providing students with access to high-quality facilities comparable to private homes.

Grace Hanlon, student and indoor track team member, noted the negative impact of asphalt on athletes' bodies and recommended a rubber track instead.

Anna Cronin, high school runner, requested reconsideration of plans and input from coaches.

Madden Myers, student and soccer player, described challenges with inadequate field sizes and locations, noting the need for additional fields to accommodate scheduling and practice demands.

Superintendent's Update

Superintendent Hallett reported that October student enrollment has decreased. She provided an update on e-bike parking, noting that spaces have been successfully reassigned and that all e-bikes must be registered by October 15. Students under 17, per Massachusetts state law, will lose biking privileges if unregistered, and parents will be notified. She shared that MCAS and accountability results show progress above the state average. New high-quality instructional materials are being rolled out, and a workshop for a detailed review will be held on October 22. Superintendent Hallett noted that recent open houses were held at NHS last Tuesday and Thursday, with CPS hosting theirs tonight and NIS tomorrow. Shantaw Bloise-Murphy inquired about the enrollment drop, and Tim Lepore suggested a deeper review and earlier data availability in August. Dr. Hallett responded that it was just received and the district can request the data from the state.

Presentations and discussions of issues to the Committee

School Resource Officers Update - Officer Cassie Thompson & Officer Angela Paterson

Officer Cassie Thompson introduced Officer Angela Paterson as the district's second School Resource Officer. Their hours are 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and their typical day includes assisting with morning and afternoon traffic, teaching a criminal justice elective to juniors and seniors, conducting school patrols, and consulting with support

staff on student concerns. They actively participate in district events such as lockdown training, career fairs, and emergency response coordination with the fire department, as well as investigating stolen bikes. Their work emphasizes building strong relationships with students starting in Pre-K and responding to medical emergencies. Additional responsibilities include annual crossing guard training, monthly camera checks, and providing bike helmets and locks as needed. Officer Thompson also teaches e-bike safety, organizes Halloween safety bags, conducts bike safety lessons for younger students, and speaks in health classes on internet safety and alcohol.

The committee expressed agreement and noted that the district is fortunate to have both officers.

Proposed NPS Speaker Request & Vetting Protocol - Superintendent Hallett

Superintendent Hallett presented the proposed NPS Speaker Request and Vetting Protocol, noting recent rapid updates. She emphasized the importance of ensuring that all speakers for students are properly reviewed. Dr. Hallett reviewed the draft protocol form in detail and outlined the approval process, which requires completion of the form and vetting by a designated group of district employees.

Shantaw Bloise-Murphy asked whether alternate activities would be provided for students whose parents opt them out, and Dr. Hallett confirmed that they would.

Dr. Lepore suggested that a School Committee member be included on the vetting committee, while Ms. Bloise-Murphy disagreed, noting it is outside the committee's role.

Homeschooling Report - Mellisa Devitt, Assistant Superintendent of Academic Operations Mellisa Devitt, Assistant Superintendent of Academic Operations, presented the annual homeschooling report. She noted that procedures remain the same, with online forms simplified for submission to her and Beth. There are 14 students from nine families. She reviewed historical data and explained that some families were unaware of the paperwork requirement.

Dr. Lepore asked how the district tracks all homeschool students, and Ms. Devitt explained that it operates on an honor system, and some families are unaware they need to submit both the paperwork and the curriculum they are using.

Ms. Gallagher-Byrne inquired whether homeschooled students may participate in school activities, and Ms. Devitt confirmed that they may.

Dr. Lepore asked about curriculum evaluation, and Ms. Devitt explained that the district does not evaluate it, though families do submit required documentation.

Suicide Prevention Update - Sherri Lewis Sholler, Coordinator of Student Services

Sherri Lewis Sholler, Coordinator of Student Services, provided an update on the district's suicide prevention initiatives. She reported that the district was invited to apply for a grant last spring, joining seven other participating districts for a two-year program. The first phase involves assessing existing programs, followed by identifying and addressing gaps in services this spring. Efforts include representation from all areas and collaboration with community partners such as Fairwinds and the Family Resource Center, with a focus on promoting protective factors. This year's program, Cartwheel, is part of ongoing improvements to policies and protocols developed last spring.

Ms. Bloise-Murphy and Dr. Lepore expressed appreciation for the work being done.

Ms. Gallagher-Byrne inquired about the grant amount and its funding, and Ms. Lewis explained it provides \$5,000 per year, covering training materials and a mandatory kick-off event. Ms. Gallagher-Byrne also asked about teacher interaction and field notes, and Dr. Gately noted that when she started, it was clear the district needed these supports.

Advanced Placement Results - Mandy Hilemn, Nantucket High School Principal

High School Principal Mandy Hilemn reported that 142 students participated in Advanced Placement testing, completing a total of 265 exams with an average score of 3.02. She noted that 73.94% of exams earned a score of 3 or higher, which is considered a benchmark for predicting college success and degree completion. She referenced research, including findings from the National Center for Educational Accountability, showing that performance at this level correlates strongly with college persistence and graduation. Ms. Hilemn reviewed the

five-year summary of AP results, the AP Scholar criteria, average score breakdowns, and participation data by race and ethnicity. She concluded by recognizing students for their commitment and effort across all AP courses. Ms. Bloise-Murphy requested clarification on whether fewer colleges are accepting scores of 3 for credit. Ms. Hilemn explained her understanding that while colleges still value seeing AP scores, more institutions are no longer granting course credit for a score of 3. Dr. Hallett confirmed this trend, noting that AP courses provide strong academic preparation, but students are not guaranteed to receive college credit for them.

Committee discussions and votes to be taken

Vote to approve the donation from Friends of NPS to Nantucket High School in the amount of \$2,000.00 for guest speaker. *Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve, seconded by Shantaw Bloise-Murphy, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved unanimously*

Vote to approve the donation from Ronald & Susan Levy for \$500.00 to Nantucket High School Nursing Program. *Shantaw Bloise-Murphy made a motion to approve, seconded by Timothy Lepore, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved unanimously*

Vote to approve the August 19, 2025 Workshop Meeting Minutes. *Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve, seconded by Shantaw Bloise-Murphy, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved unanimously*

Vote to approve Transfers & Invoices. *Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve, seconded by Shantaw Bloise-Murphy, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved unanimously*

Student School Council Representative, Danielle Lewis not present.

Agenda for the next meeting - October 22, 2025, Proposed Workshop - Draft FY27 School Calendar, 2025 MCAS/Accountability Review, School Improvement Plans

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 7:58 PM by Timothy Lepore, seconded by Shantaw Bloise-Murphy, and with none opposed, the motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Katie Bedell
School Committee Clerk