

***Hanover School Committee Meeting Minutes
December 4, 2019
Hanover High School***

Present: Mrs. Leah Miller, Mrs. Ruth Lynch, Mrs. Libby Corbo and Mrs. Kimberly Booker

Also Present: Matthew Ferron, Thomas Raab, Deborah St. Ives, Keith Guyette, Matthew Paquette, Matthew Plummer, Kelly Stukenborg, Sheila Walsh

Absent: Mr. John Geary

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Mrs. Miller

Public Comment: None presented

Approval Minutes:

Motion by Miller to approve the November 13, 2019 School Committee General Session minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Corbo. Booker abstained. The motion carried.

Report of the Superintendent presented by Mr. Ferron:

- **Events and Updates** – Enjoy the holiday events at all schools. Received two annual updates from the New England School Development Council (NESDC) for budget/planning information, special education trending and school enrollment projections through 2029.

Mrs. Miller asked if there were any surprises. Mr. Ferron replied there were not and indicated that the upward trend was what they expected. Dr. Raab added that it is very comparative to previous years.

- **SEPAC Update** – Presented by Jacqueline Porro and Michelle Gardner, co-chairs of this committee. This document can be found on the Town of Hanover website. The following topics were discussed:
 - 2018/2019 school year was very successful, same hopes for current school year.
 - Meet the Administration Night provided family discussions with administrators
 - Basic Rights Evening for IEP Primer; personal/general/legal questions answered
 - First grade-wide public meeting was held in October
 - Roundtable Forum planned for January
 - Spring events TBD: Social Event, Nutrition, Mental Health Awareness and Staff Appreciation Awards
 - Board Meetings: open to all, voting by Board, agendas distributed prior to meetings
 - Working Group: designed to solicit parental input of all services offered
 - ABA Programming progress report of recommendations from June of 2019
 - Volunteers gather info for follow-up meetings
 - First grade-wide public meeting was held in October
 - Next meeting is scheduled for a date in April of 2020

Mrs. Miller questioned the next working group meeting date. Mrs. Gardner replied that one is planned for both January and March and noted that all are welcome. Any questions can be emailed to: hanoversepac@gmail.com

Planning for 2019/2020: District wide mission to work on inclusion and with a major focus on outreach.

Mrs. Miller asked when the meetings are held. Mrs. Gardner replied that meetings are held on the last Friday of the month at 11:00am.

Mrs. Booker questioned holding evening meeting for working families. Mrs. Porro added an evening meeting might soon be scheduled followed by a social event. This is tentatively planned for February. Mrs. Gardner added that they are trying to be sensitive to parent's schedules but also to the schedules of the many administrators that are often present for the meetings.

Mrs. Gardner thanked the Hanover Administration for their collaboration, dedication and opportunities offered to this group.

Mrs. Lynch questioned the Working Group on Literacy in reference to training and asked if this would focus on IEP and 504 Plan training programs for staff mentoring. Mrs. Gardner responded that the group is still working on gathering data and feedback but that staff training is an area of focus and they want to look at the best way of providing staff training.

Mrs. Corbo questioned what the best way to communicate with the group might be. Mrs. Gardner noted that their email account is closely monitored as well as the two groups on Facebook. In addition, Mrs. Corbo questioned the inclusion of SEPAC notices and communication within the community Preschools, Early Intervention and Pre-K mentoring packets for the upcoming school year. Mrs. Gardner proposed a potential collaboration with Cedar School in the future to get this message distributed.

- **Traffic Study Committee Update** - Presented by Mrs. Booker. The last meeting was held on November 5th and meets the first Tuesday of every quarter. Mrs. Booker noted that busses will be impacted by this study in the following ways:
 - The new four-way stop and the tighter intersection area near Myette's has impacted the busses being able to turn onto the oncoming streets. There is a proposal to do a similar design at 4 corners in Hanover.
 - It is likely that Woodland Street will not longer allow a left turn into and out of that street. Woodland Street is now a major cut through from route 53. The bus company said that this change would affect pick up and drop off on Frank's Lane.
 - There is also discussion about gating off Woodland Street completely. If the street is gated, there would be access for emergency vehicles. If it is going to impact the bus routes significantly the school department will request that the change would not apply to busses.
 - There was a study conducted on Winter Street. The study recommended (but the committee did not support the recommendation) that Winter Street become a one-way street. The bus company also stated that would impact bus routes as many busses slow down Winter Street not just for pick-up but also for drop off.
 - There is a proposal to do a pilot study to block off access to route 139 from one of the feeder streets in the center of town (across from town hall). The representatives from the bus company had concerns with any changes as it could impact their routes.
 - The town is studying the intersection in the center of town, but they are still awaiting the results of the study and will likely be the topic of discussion in the February meetings.

Dr. Raab added that traffic study concerns are that of Steve Ingle and they will be worked on thoroughly. He added that Mr. Ingle appreciates having a seat at the table to work through these concerns.

Mrs. Booker questioned the limit of the left turn onto Route 139. Dr. Raab added that allowing access by the cemetery and closing access by the ballpark would help. All options will be discussed.

Mrs. Booker questioned if the pilot study should be done during the school year or over the summer. Dr. Raab will pass in that question to Mr. Ingle.

Mrs. Lynch questioned the effectiveness of the safety speed zone on Pleasant Street by the Middle School. Mrs. Booker will ask Officer Kane at the next meeting and report to the Committee.

Report of Finance Department - Presented by Dr. Thomas Raab:

- **FY '21 Budget Update** – This update is very much a work in progress and Dr. Raab is working closely with each team to ensure it is accurate. The following is a snapshot of the document that can be found on the Town of Hanover website:
 - *AUG-OCT 19*: Finalize Strategic Objectives/Goals, Evaluate FY 2020 Budget status and progress
 - *November 2019*: Principals/Directors work to prioritize needs; Leadership Team evaluates personnel and expense needs for alignment with strategic objectives; and Preliminary projections for SC on November 13th
 - *December 2019*: Full Leadership Team meetings to review options; Superintendent and Town Manager review projections and begin planning process; Assistant Superintendent for Business & Finance and Superintendent prepare personnel and expense strategies; and Budget Subcommittee meets to review progress
 - *January 2020*: Budget 1.0 draft documents to School Committee on January 8th; Presentation of FY 2021 Budget 1.0 to School Committee on January 22nd; and Development of budget options for Version 2.0+
 - *February 2020*: School Committee review and evaluation; Advisory Committee meetings as invited; and Staff and community communication/updates
 - *March 2020*: Increase community awareness and engagement; Public Hearing on the FY 2021 Budget (March 11th); School Committee vote to support budget; and Advisory Committee Presentation
 - *April 2020*: Ongoing communication between School Committee, Town Manager, Board of Selectmen, and Advisory Committee; and Review and evaluation of budget options
 - *May 2020*: Town Meeting
- **Donations** – Donations totaling \$513.50 were received from Arbella Insurance Foundation, Gregory Tucker and Sally Cole Tucker in memory of Bart Heefner and Bay State Textiles.

Motion by Miller to approve the Donations in the amount of \$513.50 as written. The motion was seconded by Lynch. The vote carried unanimously.

Report on Teaching and Learning:

- HHS MCAS/AP/SAT Presentation – Presented by Mr. Paquette, Mr. Plummer, Mrs. Stukenborg and Dr. Walsh. This document can be found in its entirety on the Town of Hanover website. The following topics were discussed in detail:
 - MCAS: STE Results, Class of 2021- Hanover, State, Overview of Next Generation MCAS 2.0 & Math and ELA Results, Class of 2021 - Hanover, State

- AP: Overview of AP and Enrollment and Results by Subject - Hanover, State, Global
- SAT: Overview of SAT Results, 2018-2019 School Year - Hanover, State, Global, DART+

Mrs. Miller thanked all involved for this in-depth assessment.

Mrs. Corbo added that she would be leaving early and appreciates the hard work.

Mrs. Anne Coates commented on behalf of the teaching staff. The teachers are always open to discussion and look forward to the colleague collaboration.

Mr. Paquette thanked Korri Byron, Keri Morrison, Brian Converse and the teachers of Hanover High School for their unending collaboration on this presentation.

Mr. Paquette noted that the Administration's ultimate intention is to raise the Academic Profile within HHS. Attendance, homework, scheduling and grading are all assessed when discussing the standardized academic well-being of a student. Mr. Plummer noted that all the data was gathered from the Dept. of Education, The U.S. Census and The College Board. All information is public and readily available.

Discussion Related to the Math & Science MCAS:

Mrs. Lynch questioned the breakdown of students and percentages. It was noted that within the (202) students, a single student included in the Special Education group could also be included within the Economically Disadvantaged group, or another group falling within that "high need" category as well. Mr. Paquette explained that some students are in all three groups, so there may be overlap. Mr. Plummer explained that using percentages does not allow for student v. student discrimination.

Mrs. Miller questioned why Math and English MCAS are different from other subjects. Mr. Plummer replied that there is no good answer and the scoring will change in 2 years.

Mr. Plummer commented that a shift in proficiency will change the potential levels for all students. The Math MCAS is an opportunity to target interventions to move students into the higher achievement. In addition, Economically Disadvantaged Students historically have been difficult to track, as they tend to remain anonymous. All students are offered support in all areas.

Discussion Related to the ELA MCAS:

Mr. Ferron noted that the most important thing right now is working to shift all our results to the passing column. To accomplish this, teaching our kids at the earliest levels is important. Focusing on the High Needs Group will impact these test scores overall. Finding the most sensitive way to subtly help students in one of these High Needs Groups will be necessary.

Mrs. Lynch commented that Special Needs students know they are in this group by the time they reach high school, but that Economically Disadvantaged Students might not know. She questioned what services within the community can be provided for these students. Mr. Plummer added that a student's schedule can be adjusted to accommodate their home schedule. Mr. Paquette added that a study hall can be added and work to be used as credits.

Discussion related to the AP Test:

Mr. Paquette noted that enrollment has increased due to population and more courses offerings. The College Board wants an open enrollment practice to enable students the ability to challenge themselves.

Mrs. Miller questioned why the College Board wants to see open enrollment. Mr. Plummer replied that ultimately the company wants middle school students to take the test, as a fee is charged when the test is taken. Mr. Paquette expects to see enrollment level due to a natural student self-regulation and thus the focus can shift to assessing student performance.

Mrs. Lynch questioned the number of students who are taking AP courses for the first time. Dr. Walsh noted that approximately half of the students enrolled are taking a course for the first time. Mrs. Lynch appreciated the recognized need for a Humanity class in addition to an Honors class. This will help students' transition into a college freshman English course.

Mrs. Miller asked about the enrollment numbers in these classes this year as compared to last year, and Dr. Walsh noted the numbers were similar to last year, but hope that the numbers spread out in the next year. Mr. Paquette noted that enrollment does not always indicate a high-ranking performance.

Mrs. Corbo questioned the difference in scoring based on regular date v. makeup date. Mr. Paquette replied that performance would be based on post class cessation.

Mrs. Miller questioned the rate of AP classes for seniors. Mr. Paquette and Mr. Plummer added that Psychology has no prerequisite and tends to be favored by seniors.

Mrs. Corbo commended the high performance of the Spanish AP exam.

Mrs. Lynch questioned the possibility of splitting the AP History course into a two-year program, instead of just one year. Mr. Paquette replied yes and that most schools do. However, HHS remains above state level and will continue as in prior years.

Mrs. Lynch appreciated that the focus is on student commitment when taking AP classes. She questioned the consistency of AP class requirements and teacher grading v. AP test performance. Mr. Plummer and Brian Converse included grading, GPA, exam scores and attendance as well. She questioned whether students who scored a 2 or 3 on the exam, if the teacher had graded higher on the report card at the end of the first semester. Dr. Walsh added that a student might excel in class but perform poorly on the class or vice versa. Mr. Plummer added that the district needs a complete grading system refresher in terms of managing expectations in both students and the community.

Mrs. Lynch commented that AP teachers should be AP "readers". Mr. Paquette noted that being a "reader" would certainly increase performance for that teacher, but Dr. Walsh also added that becoming a reader would take a week away from their other classes.

Mrs. Corbo questioned the enrollment criteria for AP courses and what is being done in other towns that might benefit Hanover. Mr. Paquette added that there are prerequisites, with some being more extreme than others such as a numerical prerequisite, standardized test scores and student interviews. Hanover takes several of these criteria into account and sees the need to manage enrollment and performance.

Mrs. Miller questioned the waiver process for AP courses and if the parents are involved. Mr. Plummer said parents are absolutely included. He added that teachers recommend and meet with students/parents based on class selection v. recommended class. Mrs. Corbo questioned the process when a students' enrollment request is denied. Dr. Walsh replied that all students will be given the opportunity to participate in the class.

Mrs. Lynch questioned whether a writing sample is required. Dr. Walsh replied no, not at this time.

Mrs. Corbo questioned comparing our MCAS and AP results with DART schools. Mr. Plummer replied that the Department of Education provides all that information.

Mrs. Booker questioned the Albert Assessment Tool. Mr. Plummer replied that is parallel to iReady.

Discussion Related to the SAT:

Mrs. Miller commented that Hanover is below the global rate and thinks it warrants continued conversations about moving these results upward. Mr. Plummer replied that 50% of Hanover students score above the national average of 1000 and if we continue to focus on this exam, as is the plan, there is great potential to increase these scores.

Mrs. Miller commented that we are continually compared to school districts that we are not necessarily comparable and questioned if the data is accurate in that comparison. Mr. Plummer noted that we are different currently, but are evolving to become closer each year.

Mrs. Lynch questioned the “Digital Patchwork” comment in regards to the Albert Assessment Tool. Mr. Plummer replied that all students are able to practice what is learned in school online. Dr. Walsh added that schools offer many digital platforms that would not have to be purchased in-home if they were to simply utilize the Albert Assessment tool instead.

Mrs. Lynch asked how the Albert Assessment Tool was found. Mr. Plummer noted that 3 of their AP teachers found it and let him know that it would be worthwhile.

Mrs. Booker questioned if Hanover’s comparison to other schools globally can be viewed. Mr. Plummer said no, but we do receive the percentage of students who get questions right or wrong.

Mrs. Lynch questioned as to whether a situation happened that would prompt this discussion. Mr. Plummer replied that this came from Instructional Rounds, discovering that we were not providing the same opportunity at all levels for students to demonstrate higher thinking.

Mrs. Miller questioned whether Albert Assessment is adapted from year to year. Mr. Plummer replied that he does not know for sure.

Mr. Ferron noted that looking back shows the information needed to positively move forward.

Mrs. Lynch added that this presentation on high school assessment was provided to the School Committee prior to the meeting, which helped in understanding the data.

Mrs. Lynch questioned whether the faculty has seen the feedback. Mr. Paquette replied yes.

Mrs. Lynch mentioned the possibility of college graduates speaking to students on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. Mrs. Miller added that a pre-interview before college is a positive reinforcement.

Mrs. Lynch appreciated the amount of work put into this presentation, the desire to make change and to employ a committed staff. She appreciated the passion in the “Pathways” presentation a few weeks ago and she sees that passion again tonight. She stressed that the mental health of students is so important for success.

Mr. Paquette noted that curriculum changes will in turn improve test taking strategies and college readiness.

Mrs. St. Ives added that during a conference she recently attended, a superintendent commented that their school's goal is to redefine success. Students are at the center and success needs to be discussed in a safe, reflective way. Mr. Plummer thanked Dr. Walsh on her mental health bullet within the assessment. He added that the opportunity to practice taking tests will alleviate the stress of standardized testing.

Mrs. Miller appreciated the time put into this assessment and looks forward to the results. She wished all a great holiday break.

Action Items:

- No items at this time

Public Comment: None presented

The next School Committee meeting is scheduled for January 8, 2020 at Hanover High School. Expected agenda items will be: MCAS Presentation Grades 3-8, FY'21 Budget 1.0 Update, Superintendent Mid-Cycle Progress Report, NRC Annual Report Update, Health and Wellness Update, Master Plan Implementation Committee Update.

Motion by Miller to adjourn at 10:17pm. The motion was seconded by Booker. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Tara L. Wakefield

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Recording Secretary for the Hanover School Committee

Documents Used:

Donations

HHS MCAS/AP/SAT Presentation

Appendix A

Appendix B