

Hanover School Committee Meeting Minutes
August 17, 2020
Virtual Meeting

Present: Mrs. Leah Miller, Mrs. Ruth Lynch, Mr. John Geary, Mrs. Libby Corbo and Mr. Pete Miraglia

Also Present: Matthew Ferron, Thomas Raab, Debbie St. Ives, Keith Guyette, Matthew Paquette, Daniel Birolini, Jane DeGrenier, Michael Oates, Matthew Plummer and Patricia Smith.

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 3:02 by Mrs. Miller

Mrs. Miller began the meeting by thanking the community members who sent emails and questions, all of which have been combined into the presentation and the Committee and Administration will do their best to answer as many as possible during the meeting. Mrs. Miller noted she understands there is a great deal of anxiety about school reopening and it is the goal of the Committee and Administration to get students in front of teachers as much as possible.

Report of the Superintendent presented by Mr. Ferron:

FAQ Presentation: Mr. Ferron stated he is grateful for all the feedback received and while this is a challenging process everyone is doing their best. Mr. Ferron discussed the presentation for the meeting and the topics that would be covered. He discussed the need for a phased approach to the school year in order to make the return to school safe for everyone. Mr. Matthew Plummer reminded the viewers of the meeting to submit their questions through the Q&A feature of Zoom so that a transcript could be kept. Each topic of the presentation was discussed and below is a summary of each topic and their corresponding questions:

Virtual Academy: Mr. Ferron stated that families will need to submit their selection for both the Virtual Academy as well as Transportation no later than 5:00 pm on August 20th so that planning can begin on the cohorts. He noted that a survey would be going out to families immediately following the meeting and Mr. Plummer showed viewers how they could access the survey on Aspen as well. Mr. Ferron noted the survey is very short, only two questions and should only take a minute to complete. Mr. Ferron then briefly reviewed the approved hybrid model chosen at the last meeting.

Health and Safety: Mr. Ferron introduced Mrs. Patricia Smith, Director of Health Services to discuss the health and safety protocols for the upcoming school year. Mrs. Smith walked the viewers through each slide outlining the precautions and protocols that have been put in place for several different scenarios including: assisting staff and students who present with symptoms while in school, students or staff testing positive, contact tracing, more than one positive case, how to assess your children for Covid symptoms and using your best judgement when sending kids to school. Below are the questions related to Health and Safety:

- Will parents have to show documentation of waiting 5 days to take a test as instructed? Mrs. Smith stated that if there is a positive case, any close contacts will receive a notice from the school indicating the timeline they should follow for testing.
- Is a rapid test acceptable, or should people request a PCR test? Mrs. Smith noted that if you are getting a rapid test, you should also get a PCR test to ensure accuracy and reliability.
- Will students on the same bus as a positive student be required to quarantine? Mrs. Smith said this will depend on each scenario and if all guidelines have been followed on the bus, then it is likely quarantine is not needed, but each case would be reviewed.
- How long are test results taking to come back, and will the schools be able to help expedite? Mrs. Smith stated they are currently working with the Broad Institute to utilize their research for a rapid test and potentially have on-site testing.

- Where did the determination of 5 days before taking a test come from? Mrs. Smith stated this guideline comes from the Mass. Dept. of Health and the DESE because testing prior to 5 days from time of exposure has a higher occurrence of false negative.

Mr. Ferron circled back to discussed the Virtual Academy and the various models. Mr. Matthew Paquette discussed the High School Model noting they want education to be on par with the HHS education and are using two digital platforms to ensure that happens, VHS and Ingenuity. He noted that students will be assigned 7 courses and their 5 core classes will be taken through VHS learning while the Ingenuity platform would assign electives. Mr. Paquette noted students in the Virtual Academy will be held accountable to all the same things, attendance, grades, etc. that other students will be, and Hanover staff will also monitor this process. Mr. Birolini discussed his team will focus on keeping Hanover kids with Hanover kids and staff as much as possible. He noted that at this point they don't know what that will look like, but we will work to do that. They are trying to match up students with the best staff to suit their needs. Mrs. DeGrenier discussed the Virtual Academy at the elementary level stating students will be assigned to a homeroom and will meet with their teacher several times throughout the day. She noted that they are still looking at how to bring specialist experience to them through the virtual experience. The questions for this topic are below:

- Will there be a set schedule at the High School level? Mr. Paquette replied yes. They will be expected to engage throughout the day.
- Will Hanover teachers be the ones teaching in the Virtual Academy? Mrs. St. Ives stated they are working hard to make that happen and it will certainly look different at each level but the important part is making connections and making each day feel like a regular school day.
- Can families change their mind and switch to the Virtual Academy after? Mrs. St. Ives said yes. Parents can even decide which plan works best for each child in the family. She noted if they choose to make a change, it will require a little flexibility. Changes would likely occur at a natural break in the school year, i.e. the end of a semester.
- Can students on an IEP attend the Virtual Academy and still receive services? Mr. Paquette replied yes. Services will be delivered remotely by specialists and all needs will be maintained.
- Can a student repeat freshman year in person if they do it virtually this year? Mr. Paquette stated there would not be a need to repeat, as the curriculum would be a complete years' worth of work, but certainly individual needs can be discussed as they come up.
- Will elementary kids feel they are a part of the classroom? Mrs. DeGrenier replied yes. Students will have a primary teacher and will have times they are all together virtually and will also meet individually with the teacher as well.
- Will families be contacted if they choose remote only? Mrs. St. Ives noted that once all responses have been collected, communication will go out to those families.
- Will the three days they are remote have the same structure as the Virtual Academy? Mr. Paquette said it won't be exactly the same, but it will be similar.
- Can preschool students attend virtually? Mrs. St. Ives noted this has been discussed a lot, but parent feedback questioned the developmental age and being on a device for so much of the day. She stated they are being as creative as possible.

Student Cohorts: Mr. Ferron stated these cohorts will be done as strategically as possible and make it work out the best to meet all student's needs. He noted that patience will be required as they work through the process. Mr. Plummer discussed the methodology noting they will be looking at different ways to split the cohorts such as names, location and transportation needs, but he also noted that he believes Hanover can do better than that. Mr. Plummer stated Administrators already spent a great deal of time placing students in particular classes based on needs; so, we don't want to lose all that work. He stated cohorts will be thoughtful and intentional and will take the info we receive about remote only and transportation and move from there. The questions for this topic are below:

- How will it work at HHS with honoring levels? Will both cohorts have equal opportunities to take all levels as needed? Mr. Paquette responded yes. All students will be able to take all classes and levels as needed.
- How many students to a class in each cohort? Mrs. St Ives stated that will depend on the spacing. She noted there will be no cap, but it will depend on each classroom's size to ensure 6ft social distancing.
- Will cohorts have friendly faces for students? Mr. Plummer said yes, and much of the work the administrators have already done is to ensure that students who work well together remain together and vice versa.
- On remote days, will students be able to complete work later in the day based on schedules and needs? Mr. Paquette replied it is the expectation that they attend classes at the assigned time for that period and want them to stay as close to a schedule as possible. He also noted they will work to find fixes for unique circumstances.
- Is there a chance that siblings won't go on the same day? Mr. Plummer replied they are committed to having siblings attend on the same day.
- Will cohort A have less days with Monday holidays? Mr. Plummer said no, and that has been discussed and in the end it all balances out over the year.
- If we return to full in-person school, will students be in the same classes as during the hybrid model? Mrs. St. Ives replied yes.
- What are the metrics used that would allow us to return to in person learning? Mr. Ferron said that it is too early to say, but it will continue to be monitored. He stated that no one knows what is going to happen once we are back in school and it will be a wait and see situation. Mr. Ferron said the administration will watch metrics and work with the Board of Health every day.

Operations, Facilities and Transportation: Dr. Raab discussed the facilities and operations protocols. And noted he has been in constant communication with DPW and the facilities team to set protocols. He noted the custodial staff will focus on cleaning high touched surfaces and community spaces, cleaning and sanitizing nightly and ensuring that the facilities staff is full prepared to make sure that they are prepared. Dr. Raab stated that Wednesdays and Saturdays will be utilized for deep cleaning days with the Clorox 360 machines. Dr. Raab stated he is confident that they have a good plan in place. He also noted the HVAC systems are being inspected currently and will also have air quality testing done and will continue to monitor this once the buildings open. Dr. Raab also discussed transportation stating that the current guidelines are currently one student per seat on alternating seats and rows with a limit to 19 students per bus. He noted that this is why the transportation question is so important for families to respond to as it will allow the team to plan accordingly. Dr. Raab stated that masks will be required on busses no matter the age of the student. Dr. Raab noted they are working very closely with the town to make sure they have funding to do all the things we've discussed that is above and beyond their typical budget. The questions for this topic are below:

- Can you opt in for Transportation even if it is just one-way? Dr. Raab replied that if you plan to use transportation at all, please indicate yes.
 - Can students still bring their lunch to school and will there be adequate spacing? Dr. Raab replied any students with allergies will be accommodated for and lunch service will be grab and go type options when buying lunch in school.
- Mrs. St. Ives reminded everyone that there would be building based meetings for many of these questions. She noted lockers won't be used right away due to social distancing but those sorts of questions will be answered at those building meetings. She stated they doing everything possible to give you the flexibility to make the decision you need to make and then change your mind if needed.

Special Education: Mr. Ferron stated there are 500 kids receiving Special Ed. in some capacity and he understands there are a lot of questions about this. He noted the teams are working to make this work for all situations. Mr. Guyette discussed what information he had, noting that he still did not have all the answers needed. He noted he knows anxiety on returning to school is high and parents are concerned about how will kids reacclimate. He

assured viewers that his teams have been working on this and will have small group meetings at buildings for reentry as well as all staff trainings to help staff deal with the trauma this pandemic has had on the kids. Mr. Guyette noted that during ESY, there was not as much anxiety as would have been expected thankfully and instead, they were just happy to be together. The questions for this topic are below:

- What will services look like? And will there be opportunities for break out groups for “B-Grid” services? Mr. Guyette replied by saying C-Grid services will have some in person and some remote session and they want as many students in the buildings as possible. He noted this will be determined once we have more information about what families are choosing for their model. Mr. Guyette noted that Cohort C will include those who have significant and complex needs and we want those students with us as much as possible. Mr. Guyette stated that B-Grid services are allowed to be done synchronously and asynchronously. He assured parents that every service would be delivered, but it might just look different than it has in the past. He noted that his team will work with families to find the right model for each kid.

Mr. Ferron reminded the viewers that there would be a SEPAC Meeting on Tuesday, August 18th at 10:00 am and encouraged people to attend who might have questions related to special education.

Mrs. Miller noted that viewers should contact Mr. Guyette if they need the invite to the SEPAC Meeting.

Next Steps: Mr. Ferron outlined the next steps of the reopening process which include finalizing the agreement with the HTA, holding Town Hall meetings with each building principal, finalizing virtual enrollment and transportation selection. He reminded everyone that the first day of school is September 16th and he encouraged everyone to use the reopening email address to ask questions as they have them.

Below are the questions and answers from the Zoom Q&A that were read and answered during the meeting:

- Will students learn who their teachers are at the same time they learn their cohort? Mr. Birolini stated it is the hope that students would receive both the cohort and the teacher info as they have already done a lot of that work. Mrs. St. Ives noted they will be working with staff in those first 10 days to have small group meetings with students and teachers to ensure those relationships can be built as soon as possible.
- Will there be live teaching on the remote days? Mrs. St. Ives noted this will be different at each grade level, noting live teaching will be part of what happens, but they also don’t anticipate putting any student in front of a screen for six straight hours. She noted in the Hybrid model, the assigned teacher will have other students in front of them on the other cohort’s remote days. We want those teachers focused on the kids in front of them, but she also knows there will be a need for some direct instruction for students who are remote. Mr. Paquette noted the remote model from the spring was not conducive to anyone’s lives and they are hopeful that this hybrid model will work best and will combine synchronous and asynchronous learning to make it work for everyone. Mr. Birolini read the DESE guidelines and noted that HPS staff always goes above and beyond the guidelines and will work through all different styles to ensure kids have the best experience.
- Has the link for the HHS Town Hall meeting been sent out yet? Mr. Plummer stated it would be sent out after the meeting
- When will Chromebook pick up happen? Dr. Raab stated they have not received delivery yet, and he expects they will be in at end of August. He noted they will be distributed as needed and the date will be determined by building principals.
- Any word on sports? Mr. Paquette stated they hope to hear something from the MIAA today, but at this point there has been no information.
- Will school start and dismissal times be the same? Mr. Ferron replied yes. They would remain the same as last year.
- Will there be consequences for not wearing a mask in school? Mr. Ferron stated yes. There will be consequences and they will be determined at the building level, but there should also be some time to see how it goes before a consequence will be determined. Mr. Ferron stated everyone will have to be

vigilant and model that behavior for kids, but there will be a progressive discipline process for this and any other situations that come up.

FACE Update: Mrs. Kelly Lawrence discussed current guidance and noted that FACE before and after school program will open with reduced hours and capacity. She noted there will be a phased reopening for all programs and timelines will be tied to community trends and metrics while working with administrators to determine when it's safe to resume normal operations. Mrs. Lawrence stated her team will do everything they can to accommodate additional students as soon as possible. She also noted she will be at the building-based Town Hall meetings to answer whatever questions she can. She stated she expects registration won't open until cohorts are decided, likely on September 1st.

Mr. Plummer reminded the viewers where they could find the information presented at the meeting and directed them to the reopening page on the HPS website.

Mrs. Miller reminded viewers again about the building-based Town Hall meetings taking place this week.

Mr. Miraglia questioned if someone from administration could discuss the difference between synchronous and asynchronous learning and if streaming classes was always the best option? Mrs. DeGrenier stated they will use asynchronous materials to allow a mix of both and offer virtual field trips and such to give variety. Mr. Paquette stated it will look much different than it did in the spring saying the students in person and the students at home will receive similar lessons on their in-person days. He noted It's hard to monitor how much students are getting in a remote environment, but teachers will prepare for the asynchronous environment and plan those lessons to help move the learning forward.

Mrs. St. Ives stated one of the things that should be stated clearly is that administration and staff are accountable for all the standards that students would be receiving no matter of the model they are learning in. By the end of a year, a student needs to have gone through all the statewide frameworks that are expected to. She noted they will have to accommodate students and move them along to reach that benchmark.

Mr. Paquette noted they are all hopeful the hybrid model will be temporary and students can eventually return to school sooner than later.

Mrs. Lynch shared that she had read the entire school opening plan and suggests that parents also take the time to read it, as there is a great deal of information in it. She thanked Mrs. St. Ives and her team, as it's very evident that a lot of work went into that document. She also commended the principals for sharing their expertise and working to make this a workable plan. Mrs. Lynch reminded the viewers there is a spirit that Mr. Plummer highlighted by saying "Email me and I will get back to you." and that mentality is noticeable to the community

Mrs. Miller thanked the administration team who have been working around the clock and she knows this is not an easy process. She also thanked the Community for all their support.

Motion by Lynch to adjourn at 4:55pm. The motion was seconded by Geary. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Caitlin Potolicchio

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Executive Assistant/ Recording Secretary