

***Hanover School Committee Meeting Minutes***  
***February 24, 2021***  
***Virtual Meeting***  
***7:00 PM***

**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, Carol Krall, Caroline Bureau, Christopher Arancio, Kelly Stukenborg

**Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM by Mrs. Miller.

**Public Comment:** None

We adjourned from Executive Session tonight where we reviewed and approved Executive Session minutes from July 30, 2020, August 7, 2020, August 21, 2020, October 21, 2020, October 28, 2020, November 18, 2020, December 3, 2020, December 9, 2020, December 22, 2020, January 6, 2021, January 12, 2021, January 26, 2021, and January 29, 2021. We approved a motion to release aspects of the minutes that do not impact future bargaining.

**Approval of Minutes:**

January 20, 2021: Motion entertained by Mrs. Miller to approve the January 20, 2021 School Committee Minutes as written. The motion was moved by Mrs. Lynch and seconded by Mr. Geary. The motion carried unanimously.

February 3, 2021: Mrs. Miller requested the Minutes to be tabled until the next meeting as the edited version wasn't sent out for approval yet.

**Report of the Superintendent presented by Mr. Ferron:**

M.A.S.S. Academic Achievement Awards

Mr. Ferron: The MASS Association of Schools Superintendent Academic Achievement Award is given to a couple of our upcoming graduates. Every district in the State gets to give out this award. Our district gives this award to our two top students that are both outstanding in the classroom but also exhibit character, integrity, leadership, service, and athletics. Overall well-rounded and exceptional students.

Mr. Paquette: We get to recognize Hanover's best and brightest.

Welcome, Christopher Arancio. He is a member of the debate, student council, track, cross country, chair of the school-wide Relationship Committee but the most valuable experience is he has worked at the same place since he was 14 years old. According to Mr. Arancio's guidance counselor; "Chris will be the most successful in life because he exhibits empathy, understanding, and leads by example. He has always taken into consideration the thoughts and feelings of others. Chris falls in the top of the 5% of his class. That will make him an exceptional candidate at any college or university. He has received many academic awards including the Brian Book award." It is my pleasure on congratulating Christopher Arancio on receiving the M.A.S.S. Association of Schools Superintendent Academic Achievement Award.

Welcome, Caroline Bureau. She is a member of the student council, a member of the executive board, plays soccer, runs cross country, belongs to a youth group at a community church, and she works at Stop N Shop. Miss Bureau is driven, determined, and hard-working.

She is kind, outgoing, confident, quick-witted, and a strong young woman. She looks at hardships in life as challenges for which to learn. Miss Bureau has taken every AP course we offer if it fit in her schedule. Miss Bureau's guidance counselor states what she found most amazing is you would never know about the awards or accolades as she is humble. In my 15 years as a guidance counselor, we have never had a student's GPA as high as Caroline. If you were to review her grades, you would see that they are 100% each term for the entire year.

Mr. Arancio and Miss Bureau's contribution to the school, to the community, their personal qualities and strengths, their academic abilities, and there are so deserving of this award. Congratulations to both of you!

Mr. Ferron: We are proud of both of you! Congrats Christopher & Caroline!

#### COVID Health Update

Mrs. Krall: We are very happy to report that for the past week, we have been in the lower yellow COVID risk level and all of our tracking data continue to trend lower. We are currently back to October levels. This is a trend that has been seen across the country. Our tracking data is available on the Hanover Public Schools [COVID-19 Dashboard](#) and we encourage families to view the dashboard regularly. We have had only 2 positive cases among students and staff in the past week, and none in the past three days. The MIH paramedics ran 747 tests in the past week and there were only nine positive results, and out of the 384 tests that were run in the past three days, there were no positive results. This is great news, and we hope that these trends continue.

In the past week, we have sent 88 pools involving about 450 individual swabs for testing. As of today, we have had no positive results. We have had a substantial increase in the numbers of individuals who have consented to pooled testing and we hope to more than double this number of tests next week. As we have previously reported, pooled testing is a method to efficiently and inexpensively conduct surveillance testing. The purpose is to identify and isolate any asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic infection in school, reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our community, and provide reassurance when there are negative pools. Although participation is voluntary, we strongly encourage all staff and students to participate. The program will be stronger and more successful if we have a high percentage of participation.

We are committed to using every resource and tool available to keep our schools open as safely as possible, and we have the people and infrastructure to lead the way with this initiative. Based on feedback from the community, we will focus the bulk of our testing on Tuesdays, to minimize any disruptions to the in-person learning days on Wednesday and weekend activities. We also currently have access to a rapid antigen test that delivers a result in 15 minutes. We are exploring the possibility of using a combination of rapid testing and PCR testing to rule out positive individuals if there is a positive pool. This procedure is supported by DESE and MDPH and is supported by data. The rapid test we will be using is the Abbott BinaxNOW. If anyone would like additional information about the supporting data please reach out to your school nurse. We ask all families to complete the consent survey, even if you do not want your child to participate. We ask that you select either yes or no, and then you will no longer receive reminder emails. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to your school nurse or the Director of Health Services.

#### **Questions:**

Mr. Miraglia: What is the participation rate currently?

Mr. Plummer: 63.5% have elected to participate with about 58% of the parents having responded.

Mrs. Miller would like to thank the MIH program and parents that have proactively got tested when they returned from February break. This is great news.

Mr. Ferron would like to give a standing ovation for our school nurses. They have done an incredible job. Thank you!

## **Report of Finance Department presented by Dr. Raab:**

FY '22 Budget Update: There have not been any substantial changes since our January 20th meeting. Dr. Raab wanted to point out that when we initiated The Vision 2020 back in 2015, we signed for a six-year program. We knew it would be up at the end of the fiscal year 2021. Now it is his responsibility to make sure we have the funding available for the next six-year lease. After doing some research with Mrs. St. Ives, the total cost for a six-year lease is one hundred and twenty thousand dollars. The company is allowing us to pay for that over the next three years. We will be able to embed that into 2022, 2023, and 2024 budgets. It was already in the budget but was not explicit in the January 20th documents. The budget vote is March 24th and it will be republished. It will be specific and will say “Math Curriculum or Vision 2020 Renewal.” We also have embedded funds in the budget to renew iReady. The budget numbers have not changed. The meeting with the advisory board is in the next four to six weeks. As soon as that date is finalized, it will be published.

Mrs. Miller: Are we continuing with Vision because we like it?

Mrs. St. Ives: It was called Vision 2020 and now we are in 2021. We have done our research and are excited. We have talked to teachers and they are comfortable with it. We know where we need to supplement for intervention and extensions. We will be working with a newer version that has the necessary updates. The updates are subtle so the teachers are not going to feel like they are being trained on a brand-new program.

### Transportation Update:

Everyone knows that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has lifted the capacity restrictions on buses and that has allowed us to move forward more confidently. Families need to alert the school if they would like transportation and the schools will contact the bus company to make those arrangements. We have been able to accommodate all requests up to date. If you haven't reached out by now, it may not happen right away. The bus company takes student safety and seat assignments seriously. They want to make sure they get it right and they know where the students are sitting. Students will be wearing masks and windows will be open. Siblings will sit together as that has been very successful. Students will be assigned seating. We are asking parents not to show up at the bus stop without making prior arrangements. Don't do that to the bus driver then it will delay the route. It is a safety issue. Parents are asking the question; “Why aren't we automatically assigned those seats for the alternate days?” That is because many parents have chosen to drive their children and made the arrangements. As a result, the traffic patterns, each principal taking care of it. A huge weight lifted off our shoulders.

## **Questions:**

Mr. Miraglia: Given that we are starting to load up the buses again, are the schedules going to get impacted in terms of timing and the routes? How will this be communicated?

Dr. Raab: It was not brought to Dr. Raab's attention for the need to add additional stops. If they do need to tweak a time, they will tell the families. Dr. Raab will reach out to the bus company.

## **Report of Teaching and Learning:**

### High School Achievement Testing Updates by Matt Paquette:

Students took these exams during a pandemic and they never performed better. They never outperformed other districts as they did this year. They should be proud as well as the teachers. You can find the [Hanover High School Standardized Assessment Results](#) on the Hanover Public Schools webpage on The School Committee page under public documents.

#### 1) Advanced Placement (AP)

##### a. Overview

- i. Students enrolled in AP classes take the exam in May
- ii. Multiple choice and open response (essay or problem solving)
- iii. Some colleges may grant credit or waive requirements

- iv. National standardized test for students enrolled in AP classes
    - v. Scores are weighted and scaled 1-5, with 5 being the highest
    - vi. Scores of 3, 4, or 5 are considered “qualifying scores”
  - b. Enrollment and Trends
    - i. AP Students (278 in 2020)
    - ii. AP Exams (525 in 2020)
    - iii. Breakdown of Students and Exams by Graduation Year
    - iv. AP Qualifying Scores
      - 1. % of Exams with Score 3+ (1.92% in 2020)
      - 2. % of Students with Score 3+ (213 in 2020)
  - c. Results by Department – Hanover, State, Neighbors, DART
    - i. All Subjects
    - ii. Subjects by Department
      - 1. Art (3D Studio, Drawing, Music Theory)
      - 2. English (Language, Literature)
      - 3. Foreign Language (French, Spanish)
      - 4. Science (Biology, Chemistry, Environmental, Physics)
      - 5. History (Government, Psychology, U.S., World)
      - 6. Math (Calculus AB, Calculus BC, CS A Java, CS Principles)
  - d. Results by Course-Hanover, State, Global
- 2) Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)
  - a. Overview
    - i. SAT: Scholastic Aptitude Test
    - ii. Administered throughout the year
    - iii. Scoring: 1600 total points
      - 1. 800 in Evidence-Based Reading and Writing
      - 2. 800 in Mathematics
      - 3. No penalty for a wrong answer
    - iv. 5 Sections, from 25 to 65 minutes each
    - v. SAT takes about 3 hours to complete
  - b. Results – Hanover, State, Global
    - i. Total Score
      - 1. Evidenced-Based Reading and Writing
      - 2. Mathematics

## Questions:

Mrs. Corbo: Thanked Mr. Plummer and Mr. Paquette for the great presentation. It was amazing to see the increase in the scores from the prior years. Interested to know if we have the SAT comparison for the DART and neighboring districts.

Mr. Plummer: Yes, we have it and we presented it last year. He will be happy to provide it to everyone.

Mrs. Corbo: Emphasize that when looking at the AP data; twenty of the twenty tests, we scored better than the Global average for three or above. An amazing achievement. In seventeen tests, we scored better than the State and Global average for threes or above. What an increase in performance in the past few years! Some of the tests showed difficulties not just with our students but with Global and State as well. Will someone be looking at these? It looks like some of them were English Lit and English Language. They seem to be lower scoring with no explanation as to why. Will these be revamped for next year?

Mr. Paquette: Absolutely, the creators of the SAT are connected to the creators of MCAS testing. If this is revealing something that they should better understand, and it requires a close look at it. In some places, it played to a certain strength, and in others, it did not. We have learned a lot from this.

Mrs. Corbo: You mentioned colleges are SAT optional. Is that across the board?

Mr. Plummer: It is not every college. Just more than in the past.

Mrs. Miller: You mentioned with Physics and that other school districts are moving towards that test or curriculum. Are we looking into that or are we committed to the two Physics?

Mr. Plummer: We are looking into all options. It is just trying to weigh the benefits of making that test so it can only be available to Seniors. Taking Physics C would require Calculus and that would become concurrent. We need to analyze how that would impact AP Biology and AP Chemistry. The Physics teachers are getting together for the best approach.

Mr. Miraglia: Thank you for the great presentation. For the SAT, you showed all these years including this year. Was the AP all last year's data?

Mr. Plummer: All last year's data from May 2020.

Mr. Miraglia: Students can take AP courses if they want to but is it our policy or requirement for them to take the test?

Mr. Paquette: Yes, that is an absolute requirement. You take the class and then take the test at the end. One of the components we are looking at is modifying some pathways for the AP experience. There could be an opportunity for those that may have taken too much on. There needs to be the right fit.

Mr. Miraglia: Are these high scores worth actual classes at the college level?

Mr. Paquette: Yes, some students have been able to knock up to a year and a half off of college by taking a certain number of AP classes and performing at a certain level. If that is the case, it is usually colleges or universities that accept a four or higher to warrant replacing some of the general study classes.

Mr. Geary: One thing we talk about is how Hingham is stacking the deck. They have 445 tests out of a 1,000-students. They must have a requirement to allow students to become part of that stacked deck than a requirement for students to not be part of that stacked deck. They are using some qualifications in their favor to elevate their percentages and scores which we are not doing. When you look at slides 24-36, you are looking at those that scored one and those that scored five. The percentages are very similar at those scores and the bulk of the scores are between two, three, and four. If we are not stacking the deck, we are providing an opportunity for anyone who wants this open enrollment. What are we then doing to take the 10% of students that are scoring one on any particular test and either validate that they should be working towards scoring a two or a three in consecutive years or communicating with them and their families that this is not appropriate for your child? Mr. Geary understands what we are trying to achieve, but believes it is risky. What are we doing as a district for the students that are in the bottom 10% that are scoring ones and twos to determine if they are capable of achieving three, fours, and fives in consecutive years and making sure that is the appropriate pathway for the student or they are out of the program? Are we prepared as a district to have these conversations? If not that is ok, but as a district, we need to change our expectations that we are not going to be scoring 90% in the above three plus. We will always be in the 70 – 80% range.

Mr. Ferron: We need to be able to provide a fair assessment to that answer, our high school team will need to take a look over the next few days as to the progression of scores for underclassmen. Let's look at the underclassmen's grades and see how many of them did not meet the benchmark who then take AP classes the next year. We have the data that we can look at by going back a few years to see how sophomores and juniors performed versus the seniors then move forward with recommendations.

Mr. Geary: The summary of my question is; we either stack the deck or we don't. If we don't, then we change our expectations for success. That will need to be part of our narrative as we have these presentations.

Mr. Plummer: As mentioned that two years ago, we dropped the enrollment intentionally. This created some conversations between the guidance counselors, administrators, and the students saying this class may or may not be for you. Those were direct conversations more so with the seniors. The seniors are the first ones to say they have had enough. I am in college. The sophomores and juniors know this is something that the colleges are going to see. We instituted an Honors Senior English which we never had before. There are 38-40 students in Honors English when previously they would have been in AP if this were a year ago.

Mrs. Lynch: Appreciated the fact that the changes that we have made and those changes brought this tremendous increase in scores. It is critical that we know what you did in your curriculum, what you did in your assessment, and what you did in the AP classroom. Those are what brought the increase in the scores. Very interested if there were any staff changes or have more training. This program has taken right off. You have raised the number of students enrolled in the program and increased the scores. Congratulations!

**Action Items:** Superintendent Contract Extension

Motion entertained by Mrs. Miller to extend Mr. Ferron's contract as written. The motion was moved by Lynch and seconded by Geary. The vote carried unanimously.

The next School Committee meeting is scheduled for March 10, 2021. Expected agenda items will be: Reopening Report, FY '22 Budget Update, COVID Health Update

Motion by Lynch to adjourn the open session at 8:40 PM. The motion was seconded by Geary. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted by:

*Tahnee Warner*

Tahnee Warner  
Executive Assistant/ Recording Secretary