

Hanover School Committee Meeting Minutes
October 13, 2021
Hybrid Meeting
Hanover High School
7:00 PM

Present: Mrs. Leah Miller, Mr. Pete Miraglia, Mrs. Libby Corbo, and Mrs. Ryan Hall

Absent: Mrs. Ruth Lynch

Also Present: Matthew Ferron, Debbie St. Ives, Michael Oates, Patricia Smith, Daniel Birolini, Jane DeGrenier, Garry Pelletier, Matthew Mattos, Matthew Plummer, Kelly Lawrence, Kelly Stukenborg, Mike Perrone, Carol Krall, Isabella Kelley, Michael Greene

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM by Mrs. Miller.

M.A.S.S. Superintendent's Awards for Academic Excellence presented by Mr. Matthew Ferron: We now have the pleasure of having two wonderful Hanover High School students with us here this evening. They have been chosen as our Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (M.A.S.S.) award recipients. The M.A.S.S. award is an award given out by all Superintendents in the Commonwealth which is designated for Academic Excellence. This award is given to two Hanover High School students each year who have distinguished themselves in pursuit of academic excellence throughout their high school careers. Tonight, these awards go to Isabella Kelley and Michael Greene and were presented by Principal Michael Mattos.

Public Comment: Mrs. Miller will open to public comment after some updates from the School Committee but the floor will only be open until 8:00 PM.

- **Draft Policy Regarding Masks:** Mrs. Miller did reach out to DESE and the Commissioner again and asked the specific questions that the Committee has been asking specifically "What would happen if Hanover enacted an alternative masking policy? How would DESE expect the schools to implement it if we reach the eighty percent rate? That is mask or no mask for vaccinated versus unvaccinated without violating student privacy." A response was sent on behalf of the chair of the DESE board and it stated that they cannot speak of this matter because it is ongoing litigation.

Mrs. Corbo is asking the Committee to consider an alternative draft mask policy. It is not an antimasking policy but it contains different thresholds that are not linked to vaccination rates. It addresses the concerns that have been articulated by parents about equity for younger students and how we would enforce it. This policy is uploaded on our website. This alternative policy ties unmasking into pool testing. Mrs. Corbo is asking the Committee to review and discuss at the next meeting but she is also asking that the Committee to authorize Mrs. Corbo and Mrs. Miller to draft a letter to DESE and request that DESE grant to Hanover based upon this policy or a similar policy that is tied not to vaccination but is tied to pool testing. Mrs. Rebecca Bryant, our legal counsel, was consulted and she raised some concerns with proceeding without an exemption from DESE and the issues that would raise for our administrators, teachers, and the School Committee. Mr. Ferron received an update from the Commissioner and a report will be given in the next week or two in November and beyond.

Questions/Comments:

The School Committee meeting was paused at 7:29 PM while a community member was escorted out for not refraining from shouting out during the meeting. The School Committee meeting reconvened at 7:30 PM.

Motion entertained by Mrs. Miller to authorize Mrs. Corbo to reach out to DESE to see if they would grant an exemption based upon a threshold other than vaccination rates. The motion was moved by Mrs. Ryan and seconded by Mrs. Miller. The motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Miller wanted to remind the public that there is a two-minute time limit to make a public comment and that a name and address must be stated before a comment is made.

Public Comment was given by residents Bridget MacDonald-73 Water Street, Julia Leone-106 Dillingham Way, Stephanie Montegudo-49 Beckford Farm, Ed Bratz-52 Brook Circle, Tom Costello-236 Spruce Way, Kellie Puleo-40 Oakland Ave, Kara Dougherty-126 Main Street, and Darcie Edwards-187 Center Street. Residents expressed their concern with the *Mask Mandate* that DESE is enforcing, the harm it is having on their children, and asked the School Committee to reconsider and go against DESE. Please refer to the Hanover Public Schools website for the [October 13, 2021](#) School Committee Meeting for more detail.

Mr. Ferron wanted to remind everyone that the School Committee is not going to have two different groups of students. Even if our school district was at 80% vaccinated, how are we expected to police this? We do not want to police this. We do not want two groups of kids walking around our schools feeling different. How are we going to do this? We do not know, but we will do our best as we communicate it going forward. We are trying to make this work to the best of our ability.

Approval of Minutes:

September 22, 2021: Motion entertained by Mrs. Miller to approve the September 22, 2021; *School Committee Minutes* as written. The motion was moved by Mr. Miraglia and seconded by Mrs. Corbo. The motion carried unanimously.

September 29, 2021: Motion entertained by Mrs. Miller to approve the September 29, 2021; *School Committee Minutes* as written. The motion was moved by Mr. Miraglia and seconded by Mrs. Corbo. The motion carried unanimously.

Report of the Superintendent:

- **Health Services and Testing Update:** There was nothing further to discuss on this agenda item at this time.

Questions/Comments: None

- **MASC School Committee Training:** Mrs. Miller reached out to MASC regarding School Committee training and they can conduct the training on Thursday nights. Also, an email regarding the MASC/MASS 2021 Joint Conference that is being held down the Cape the weekend of November 2 and 3 was sent. All Committee members should reach out to Mrs. Miller with any Thursday conflicts and advise if interested in the joint conference.

Report of Finance Department presented by Mr. Matthew Ferron:

- **FY '23 Capital Budget Items:** Mr. Perrone and Mr. Ferron are working on capital budget items to be prepared to meet with Chelsea at Town Hall. Last year the capital spending was minimal and there weren't many projects. All that money was reserved for operational issues town-wide. We have the same capital list that has been pushed out one year. There will be additional updates at the next School Committee meeting but a report will be given to the Committee in the interim.

Questions/Comments:

Mrs. Miller: The only budget item she asked about was the Cedar vestibule which was already funded pre-COVID. This would not be a new capital ask.

Mr. Ferron has spoken to the Department of Public Works director on the Cedar vestibule and research is being done with the architects.

Mrs. Corbo: Are the Cedar School roof and parking lot still on the list?

Mr. Ferron: Yes, the Cedar School roof and vestibule have money in standing articles for those projects but unfortunately not enough to go forward with the design as presented before COVID. We will be working with Mr. Diniak who will be reaching out to the architect who did the original designs for the vestibule. The roof is straightforward. We need to get the needs assessed. There is some money in the article for repairs. The whole roof project is seven figures and that is not on the immediate radar.

- **Draft 1.0 of Superintendent's Goals for 2021-2022 presented by Mr. Matthew Ferron:** Every year goals need to be submitted to the Committee and these are big arching goals for the district. Our two biggest overarching goals which are comparable to the goals we have every year are to teach kids how to read and write and support our students who have special needs. Mrs. St. Ives and Mr. Oates will talk about these two district-wide initiatives. Two other goals are anticlimactic with everything else going on but the first one is a priority and that is to keep schools open and the second is to promote and build up the Hawk brand. Mrs. St. Ives will give an update on our Literacy Initiatives and Mr. Oates will speak on the Special Education initiatives.
 - **Update on Literacy Initiatives presented by Mrs. Debbie St. Ives:** All of our administrators were able to participate in a Reading League course on the *Science of Reading* over the summer. This is one of our main focuses and we took the time to get all administrators on the same page. Once the course was finished, we took some of our planning and prioritizing time for one of our reading specialists to lead us through a session where we debriefed about the course but more importantly talked about the application of that course to Hanover. This helped us set priorities which helped us set to develop these goals. Our instructional support team (IST) worked hard last year moving us forward. They transitioned us to the Dibels 8 assessment, they supported all classrooms during the unprecedented year, they networked on the Science of Reading program options, and they were conducting individual PD on an as-needed basis to get us through last year. One of our main initiatives is the adoption of the new program K-8. To summarize goal one; we focused on a K-8 literacy program adoption, ensuring research-based programming is available for tiers one, two, and three, and the elevation for professional capacity aligned these initiatives in all our schools. We are going to move through a pilot and implementation process very similar to our math adoption several years ago. We will assemble our Literacy Leadership team which will be comprised of teachers, special educators, and administrators, who will work through the selection process, the procurement of materials, training implementation, and pilot an evaluation of a new program. In addition, we are continuing to expand our partnership with the Landmark School focused on Language-Based programming, the Institute for Multi-sensory Education, Penn State University, and Massachusetts General Hospital Institute of Health Professionals. There are so many initiatives moving us forward and many of these initiatives have already begun.

Questions/Comments:

Mrs. Miller asked if this was the dyslexia screener? Mrs. St. Ives stated that yes, Dibels 8 is an approved dyslexic screener but there is a program out there by Doctor Nadine Gaab and her screener is now available. It is called Early Bird. Since we just did Dibels 8 (an approved screener), we thought we would take a look at it as a pilot process for this year. Also, she is almost ready to release a Pre-kindergarten version. If we can get familiar with

the kindergarten version, we can make some decisions about implementing it in Pre-kindergarten as Dibels 8 does not go down to Pre-kindergarten. We have the subscriptions, the SIT team at Cedar is looking at it, and all the reading specialists in all the buildings are aware of it. Mrs. Miller also wanted to know if the literacy program that we selected, will improve writing? Mrs. St. Ives said that yes, we are looking at a program that is based on the Science of Reading. We are looking at both reading and writing. With these other supplemental programs, we are working with well-respected people in the field. They are not programs. They are approaches and structures that can be applied to any program that is purchased.

Mrs. Hall wanted to know what criteria would we looking at to evaluate the programs we are piloting? Mrs. St. Ives stated that we use a research-based approach. We use the Curate tool from DESE and Ed Reports. We do our own research by bringing it to the IST and at the teacher level. Mrs. Hall said that in the goal summary it talked about student outcome so she was thinking more long term. Once we chose the program(s), how are we looking at that data so we know we are having success in the program and moving forward. Mrs. St. Ives responded by stating that a lot of them are our comprehensive assessment plan. We have an assessment plan that we worked hard on. We use those same metrics. We pulled back and did not over-assess students. We also take cohort data.

Mrs. Corbo would like to understand the different levels of intervention when it comes to literacy-based challenges starting at the classroom level then moving out of the classroom level. Mrs. St. Ives explained that we go by tiers one through three. Tier one is the whole class instruction when you are trying to get the general instruction across to everyone. Tier two the second dose by asking: "Do you need to hear it again or do you need me to change my approach and the way I am teaching it to you?" This can be done by a special education teacher, a reading specialist, or the classroom teacher. Tier three is when a student needs a completely different approach to whatever level they are currently working on. Most likely this would be done by a special education teacher or reading specialist. Mrs. Corbo asked what it looked like when a child has to receive services outside of the classroom as there doesn't seem to be anything listed on our website as to what we have or what we offer. Mrs. St. Ives worked with Mr. Oates and SEPAC on this last year and we do have these programs in district. The description is what he is working on with each of his teams. We will get them up by the end of this fall so people can look at the website; so, everyone can see the different descriptions. Mr. Oates stated it is ongoing work that is almost completed. Mrs. Corbo was concerned as a parent who has a child who is struggling, she would not know where to go and what was available. Mr. Oates agrees that it should be available to the public but the expectation would be that if there is a student that would be eligible or considered for one of these programs this is an ongoing conversation with the parent at the team meeting level. Mrs. St. Ives will share with the Committee the completed descriptions once they are done. Mrs. Corbo would like to know what are we doing with high school students who are struggling with reading. Mrs. St. Ives explained that Adam Hickey from Landmark was asked to continue the work we have been doing at our language-based program and expand that outside. He is going to move through all the schools. We took his recommendation on where to start and how to grow. He is going to start by observing at the high school and we will regroup with him to see what his impression is and what he would recommend. Mrs. Corbo then asked if we have a language-based disabilities program at the high school? Mrs. St. Ives noted that we have programming but it does not look the same as Center and the Middle Schools. It is considered programming because they are going into courses and that is exactly what we are going to have Mr. Hickey help us.

Mr. Miraglia referenced under Spring of 2022 it was mentioned to secure funding. He asked what kind of funding options are out there. Mrs. St. Ives responded that they are hoping to use money from the State because there are stipulations that it can be used for acceleration and academic recovery.

- **Update on Support of Students with Special Needs presented by Mr. Michael Oates:** Most of what is included in this goal is in the planning and preparation stages, with implementation occurring over the next couple of months. This goal is an improvement goal - meaning that we are looking to identify targets for future improvements or we have already identified opportunities for improvement and we are acting upon these discoveries. In regards to the identification of opportunities for improvement, included in this goal is our comprehensive program evaluation. This program evaluation is designed to determine areas of special education that warrant further investigation and improvement. This goal will provide ample

opportunity for stakeholders, including parents, faculty, and administration to highlight concerns related to special education programs and services. The evaluation will also take a close look at our substantially separate programming and recommend any adjustments that should be explored. The evaluation will also provide feedback on our current administrative structure's ability to support our special education students, teachers, and families. Finally, this evaluation will examine the experiences of families as they enter and engage in the IEP process and how well we collaborate with families around the planning and delivery of special education services. This evaluation will include an analysis of selected program data, interviews with a variety of key stakeholders, and a review of publicly accessible data concerning identification, programming, and outcomes for special education students. The timeline for this project is the analysis of data and interviews will take place in late November through December. The summary and findings will be shared with our leadership team in mid to late January and we will report out the findings and begin planning at the end of January or early February.

- Student Intervention Teams: Under the leadership of the Director of Student Services, the Student Intervention Team (SIT) process will be analyzed and improved to ensure consistency of data analysis, instructional practices and communication across the four schools.
- Parent Support Network (PSN): Under the leadership of the Director of Student Services, and faculty representatives across the district, this new group will provide support and networking for parents as their child enters the Individual Education Program (IEP), moves from grade to grade, and develops as a learner, with the ultimate goal of strengthening relationships, collaboration, and communication between home and school.

Questions/Comments:

Mrs. Miller wanted to know how parents will find out about the parent support network? Mr. Oates noted that he is recruiting people now and whether or not it becomes a part of the initial EP process, we contact the parents and reach out to SEPAC to have them share. It will have to be determined what is the best way to communicate the network.

Mrs. Hall wanted to know who the parent support network is for? Mrs. Oates stated that this is to support the parent outside the normal process.

Mrs. Corbo wanted to discuss goal number four regarding merchandising the Hawk but is not sure it rises to the level of being a goal and was surprised to see it. Mr. Ferron responded by stating it was not the merchandising but the incorporation of the spirit of the Hawk. He thinks the three goals that were laid out before this goal are the three biggest goals. He has no problem turning it over to Mrs. Lawrence.

The next School Committee meeting is scheduled for October 27, 2021, at 7:00 PM at Hanover High School. Expected agenda items will be: FY '22 Budget Updates, COVID Health Update, Draft 2.0 of Superintendent's Goals for 2021-2022, Anti-bias Leadership Presentation

Motion by Miraglia to adjourn the open session at 9:10 PM. The motion was seconded by Corbo. Roll call vote: Ryan Hall – aye, Libby Corbo – aye, Pete Miraglia – aye, and Leah Miller – aye. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Tahnee Warner

Tahnee Warner
Executive Assistant/ Recording Secretary