

***Hanover School Committee Meeting Minutes***  
***February 2, 2022***  
***Virtual Meeting***  
***7:00 PM***

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

**Also Present:** Matthew Ferron, Debbie St. Ives, Michael Oates, Patricia Smith, Kelly Lawrence, Dan Birolini, Jane DeGrenier, Garry Pelletier, Matthew Plummer, Mike Perrone, Russ Wilson

**Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM by Mrs. Miller.

Mrs. Miller spoke on behalf of the School Committee and the entire staff and extended their deepest sympathy and love to the family of Amamh Mohsin, an 8th grader who passed away last weekend. Amamh comes from a large and loving Hanover family. She will forever be in our hearts. We wish her family peace and comfort now and always. A moment of silence was observed in her memory.

Mrs. Miller opened the floor to public comment. Public comment will be open for 30 minutes. If anyone wants to speak via Zoom, they need to raise their hand, and she will call on them to speak. The speaker needs to state their name and address.

**Public Comment:**

Public Comment was given by resident Michelle Dailey, 8 Great Acres. She expressed her concern with the *Mask Mandate* that DESE is enforcing, the harm it is having on children, and asked the School Committee to come up with a plan instead of waiting for DESE. Please refer to the Hanover Public Schools website for [February 2, 2022](#), School Committee Meeting for more detail.

**Approval of Minutes:**

January 19, 2022: Motion entertained by Mrs. Miller to approve the January 19, 2022; *School Committee General Session Minutes* as written. The motion was moved by Mr. Miraglia and seconded by Mrs. Lynch. Roll Call Vote: Libby Corbo-Aye, Ryan Hall-Aye, Ruth Lynch-Aye, Pete Miraglia-Aye, and Leah Miller-Aye. The motion carried unanimously.

**Report of the Superintendent:**

- **Health /Vaccination Rate Update presented by Mr. Matthew Ferron and Mrs. Patricia Smith:**  
Superintendent Ferron turned the discussion over to Mrs. Patricia Smith, Director of Health Services but added the latest [vaccination rates](#) for all of the schools have been posted on the School Committee page.
  - Mrs. Smith presented a COVID-19 update. The [COVID-19 Dashboard](#) shows the numbers of isolations and quarantines due to COVID-19 have decreased significantly over the past week and we are optimistic that we have passed the peak of the omicron surge. We have implemented our at-home testing program and as part of that program, discontinued school-based contact tracing and test and stay. Pooled testing and symptomatic testing will remain available to those who choose to participate. Families who have opted into the at-home testing program can expect test kits for each child in the family to be sent home in backpacks, in a tamper-resistant bag, with the oldest or only child in the family tomorrow. We will send a reminder email with instructions tomorrow. The Town of Hanover has also provided an additional 2 kits for each participating family to be used at their discretion. As of today, the vaccination rate at Hanover High School has increased to 78%, with 98% of staff and 74% of students fully vaccinated. Hanover Middle School is at 58% with 53% of students and 95% of staff fully vaccinated. Center School is 48% with 92% of Staff and 43% of students fully vaccinated, and Cedar School is 42% with 98% of staff and 31% of students. The Town of Hanover hosted a second

dose clinic this evening for approximately 100 5 to 11-year-olds, so we will see that reflected in our records over the next week or two. As a reminder, DESE continues to consider 2 doses of an mRNA vaccine or 1 dose of the J&J vaccine fully vaccinated. In summary, Hanover High School is very close to meeting the criteria for the 80% threshold set forth in the DESE protocols for the masking waiver. We will continue to monitor the numbers regularly and we will let you know if anything changes. DESE has indicated that the current mask requirement is in effect through the end of this month and will be evaluated at that time. We are hopeful that if the trend continues, the Commissioner will determine that the mandate is no longer necessary beyond February 28. The optional testing programs will be re-evaluated at the end of April.

### Questions/Comments:

Mr. Miraglia inquired about the numbers and noticed the high school was within 2% of the 80% criteria. Mrs. Smith responded yes. Mr. Miraglia also noticed in doing the math that is about 15 or 16 people. 14 people already had one dose. He asked if the one doses get fully vaccinated will that get us there? Mrs. Smith confirmed that is correct.

Mrs. Corbo stated that if DESE is scheduled to revisit the *Mask Mandate* at the end of February, she would like the Committee to entertain preemptively a motion to authorize or direct the Administration to file a waiver with DESE as soon as any school hits the 80% threshold.

Mrs. Miller responded that the motion will be discussed after everyone has had a chance to ask questions n Mrs. Smith's update.

Mrs. Corbo shared that she heard encouraging news that indicated the mask requirement might be lifted and asked if Mrs. Smith if she thought coming off of February break, the Commission would be inclined to entertain lifting that requirement? Mrs. Smith said she cannot speak for the Commissioner nor does she want to speculate on that. Mrs. Corbo then asked if DESE does lift the mask requirements, how does that work for transportation since that mandate is from the Federal Government? Will they be revisiting this requirement? Mrs. Smith has not heard any news regarding the Federal Mandate but noted it will be a separate mandate.

Mrs. Ryan asked if families can still opt-in for the at-home testing if they have not done so already? Mrs. Smith responded that yes, they can by sending her an email at psmith@hanoverschools.org. Mrs. Hall then inquired if the MIAA masking policy is linked to the DESE decision or is separate for sports, etc.? Mrs. Smith answered the buses for MIAA events fall under the Federal requirement but in terms of wearing masks at sporting events would come under the MIAA rules.

Mrs. Corbo noted, at this time, the Town of Hanover has a mask mandate for town buildings and it is her understanding that the School Committee controls the school buildings. If we hit that 80% threshold and the mask mandate is lifted, would this be a conflict with the Town Manager? Mrs. Smith deferred the question to Mr. Ferron. Mr. Ferron will speak with the Town Manager.

- **Future Optional Masks at 80% Vaccination Rate:** Mrs. Miller opened up explaining that Mrs. Corbo had reached out to the committee about what it would take to apply to remove the masks. Since we are close at the high school, we thought it would be a good idea to discuss possibly voting on that and if they hit the threshold, we do not have to call another School Committee meeting to vote on them. Below are two motions:
  - Motion 1: Mrs. Miller makes a motion that upon attaining the 80% vaccination rate as prescribed by DESE at any Hanover School, the Administration will immediately apply to DESE for approval of the mask waiver. Any Hanover school attaining the 80% vaccination rate shall be mask optional for students, staff, and visitors immediately upon approval from DESE.

Motion entertained by Mrs. Miller to approve *Motion 1* as written. The motion was moved by Mrs. Corbo and seconded by Mrs. Lynch. Roll Call Vote: Libby Corbo-Aye, Ryan Hall-Aye, Ruth Lynch-Aye, Pete Miraglia-Aye, and Leah Miller-Aye. The motion carried unanimously.

**Questions/Comments:** None at this time.

Mrs. Smith wanted to explain the major change in 80% threshold. Students and staff that are not vaccinated are no longer required to wear a mask under this waiver but they are recommended to wear a mask. Mrs. Miller added that previously under the DESE mandate even if you hit 80%, anyone who was unvaccinated would still have to wear a mask and that mandate has been taken away.

- Motion 2: Mrs. Miller makes a motion that all Hanover Schools will be mask optional for students, staff, and visitors as soon as DESE lifts the in-school mask mandate. Mask requirements for additional activities including the school bus will be considered at that time.

Motion entertained by Mrs. Miller to approve *Motion 2*; as written. The motion was moved by Mr. Corbo and seconded by Mrs. Lynch.

**Questions/Comments:**

Mr. Miraglia wanted to clarification that regardless of the 80%, this is if DESE decides to lift the period. Mrs. Miller confirmed that is correct but noted we will have a Mask Policy that was enacted previous to this year. Motion 2 is in case DESE were to say mask optional, we do not have to call another School Committee meeting to vote on removing the masks. Mr. Miraglia then asked if policy would need to be amended or does this do that in effect. Mrs. Miller believe that is true but deferred the question to Mr. Ferron. Mr. Ferron responded by suggesting the motion be amended to include “this would amend our policy.”

Mr. Ferron added that as soon as we hit 80% at the high school, we will apply to DESE right away and that will be communicated. If the Commissioner stays mask optional but it is up to the community, this vote will ensure that decision.

Mrs. Hall asked if they change it and do not lift it, does this motion cover that as well? Mr. Ferron noted that the motion is clear that once DESE lifts the mandate, the School Committee has authorized him to take action that day and will notify everyone. Mrs. Miller added that this is optional and anyone can continue to wear a mask.

Mrs. Lynch asked for clarification as to how this affects the busses. Mr. Ferron responded that the busses are under a Federal mandate so masks will still need to be worn.

Mrs. Hall wanted to make sure it is optional for students and staff. Both Mrs. Miller and Mr. Ferron responded; yes. Mrs. Hall then asked if there are clear masks available for staff and students. Mr. Ferron said yes.

- Amended Motion 2: Mrs. Miller makes a motion that all Hanover Schools will be mask optional for students, staff, and visitors as soon as DESE lifts the in-school mask mandate. Mask requirements for additional activities including the school bus will be considered at that time. We will consider this as amending our mask policy.

Amended Motion entertained by Mrs. Miller to approve *Motion 2*; as written. The motion was moved by Mr. Corbo and seconded by Mrs. Lynch. Roll Call Vote: Libby Corbo-Aye, Ryan Hall-Aye, Ruth Lynch-Aye, Pete Miraglia-Aye, and Leah Miller-Aye. The motion carried unanimously.

**Report of Finance Department:**

- **FY '23 Budget Update – Version 3.0-Presented by Mr. Matthew Ferron and Mr. Michael Perrone:**

- Mr. Ferron and Mr. Perrone reviewed the [FY '23 School Budget 3.0](#) which can be found on the Hanover Public Schools website as well as the full budget presentation.
  - Updates from Budget 2.0
    - No changes to projected salaries or expenses
    - All projected positions and resources remain in the FY '23 Budget Plan
    - Updates and changes are related to funding strategies, including:
      - Increasing Town Chapter 70 Revenue projections by \$200,000 (Governor's Budget)
      - Reducing operating budget by \$200,000
      - Reducing Special Education Article by \$150,000 (now \$350,000 Warrant Article)
  - Requires strategic access to ARPA funding for mental health/counseling supports
  - Currently evaluating all FY '22 expense and salary projections to more accurately determine potential carry-over balances in revolving accounts - especially Circuit Breaker and Special Education Reserve accounts
  - This updated funding strategy relies upon ARPA funding, and a more robust carry-over in revolving accounts from FY '22 to FY '23

#### Questions/Comments:

Mr. Miraglia commented about slide three which talks about reducing the operating budget by \$200,000. Is this something that we actually did to the budget or is that something that we have done through the offsets? Mr. Perrone confirmed it is through the offsets. Mr. Miraglia continued by noting he understands the reduction taken on the SpEd Reserve Rollover. Based on all these scenarios, what is the expectation of the rollover for FY 2024? Mr. Perrone responded the roll forward SpEd Reserve is not being lowered. The Article it was originally going on is being lowered. We are expecting \$210,000 enroll and we added that to the \$350,000 that the Article will now be if it passes. His hopes are we will roll roughly the same amount in the following year.

Mrs. Corbo noted that there is a concern we are funding recurring costs with non-sustainable funds like the ARPA Grant. She inquired about receiving a line-item budget and have the ARPA costs flagged especially the personnel costs. She is concerned with digging ourselves in a hole. Mr. Perrone responded that last year it was noted where the ESSER III grants were picking up people and positions. He will do the same thing but using ARPA funds.

Mrs. Miller inquired if ARPA was renewable and not just one year. Mr. Perrone believes it goes through 2024 and Mr. Ferron stated it was at least two years.

Mr. Ferron noted Mrs. Corbo's point is well taken. They are trying to be strategic in how they do this. They have gone back the last two years and looked at what positions have been affected by COVID-19 and the economy before COVID-19. The positions that were reduced were administrators and coaches but we have added positions that are necessary and related to Student Services.

Mr. Miraglia shares in Mrs. Corbo's concern. He thinks if we have to use the ARPA money we will and if there is some robust rollover for next year, it can be narrowed down. Mr. Ferron explained the ARPER money has to be spent over the next couple of years or we lose it. That is why we put ARPA ahead of our revolving accounts. This budget gives us what we need for next year. It allows us to grow and recover in the hopes that COVID-19 is in the rearview mirror and we will adjust accordingly.

- **Preschool Tuition-Presented by Mr. Michael Oates and Mr. Michael Perrone:** Mr. Oates reviewed the Preschool Program for school year 2021-2022 and the plan for school year 2022-2023. Mr. Perron reviewed the current and proposed financials. You will find the [Preschool Tuition presentation](#) in full on the Hanover Public Schools Website.

### Questions/Comments:

Mrs. Miller was pleased with the cost slide being added. Her thought is since it is known there will be a COLA increase in the negotiated contract with teachers each year, maybe, we can have small increases every year so there is not such a big increase all at once. Mr. Ferron agreed.

Mrs. Hall inquired that since the extended day is for the substantially separated classroom, are the pilot and intergraded preschool classes the same two and half hours, four days a week? Mr. Oates responded most students in the substantially separated classroom have some type of extended day. The pilot classroom is a longer school day and is three hours a day versus the two and half hours.

Mrs. Corbo asked when parents should plan on applying for one of these spots in the preschool? Mr. Oates responded that it is advertised early. The Cedar School gets the word out early in the community because we know the students that are coming that are going to receive services. We have identified those students and are meeting on those students with their team ahead of them enrolling.

Mrs. Lynch inquired about the age a child can start in the programs. Mr. Oates responded that there are three- and four-years olds in the program. Mrs. Lynch asked if most of the children that need special services start receiving them when they are three? Mr. Oates replied that they are identified before they are three. Mrs. Lynch then asked when they reach their third birthday, is that the time that they are allowed to receive services? Mr. Oates replied yes. Mrs. Lynch continued to ask if students come in throughout the year as they turn three? Mr. Oates answered yes and added that students may move in and for whatever reason are not necessarily identified. Given their birthday and level of need, they can be in the program quickly. Mrs. Lynch wanted to know if that affects the number of peer role models that will be in the program. Mr. Oates noted that they try to predict out as best as possible and make sure there is a maximum number of peer models to accommodate the program.

Mrs. Miller commented that now that we have those pilot preschools, is it possible to ask if they'd like to move into a peer model role? Mr. Oates replied it is a possibility and added with the pilot being new this year, some of these things are being worked on. The Cedar team is doing a good job because when we would invite thirty-six to forty three- and four-year-olds into our program, we might identify a few students there who need special education services. This year they are working on whether to shift them over to the integrated model. Mrs. Miller shared how great this is and she does think it is the reputation of the preschool over the years.

Motion entertained by Mrs. Miller to approve to *Increase Preschool Tuition* as presented tonight. The motion was moved by Mr. Miraglia and seconded by Mrs. Lynch. Roll Call Vote: Libby Corbo-Aye, Ryan Hall-Aye, Ruth Lynch-Aye, Pete Miraglia-Aye, and Leah Miller-Aye. The motion carried unanimously.

- **Donations Presented by Mr. Michael Perrone:** Donations were received from Hanover School Families via Stop and Shop, Bay State Textiles, Employee Donations 2017, National Honor Society, and the Hanover PTA totaling \$19,559.14. You can see the [donations](#) in full on our Hanover Public Schools website.

**Questions/Comments:** None at this time.

Mrs. Miller appreciated and thanked Stop and Shop, Bay State Textiles, Harvard Pilgrim, National Honor Society, and the Hanover PTA.

Motion entertained by Mrs. Miller to accept the donations in total of \$19,559.14. The motion was moved by Mr. Miraglia and seconded by Mrs. Lynch. Roll Call Vote: Libby Corbo-Aye, Ryan Hall-Aye, Ruth Lynch-Aye, Pete Miraglia-Aye, and Leah Miller-Aye. The motion carried unanimously.

## Report on Teaching and Learning:

- **HPS Vision Statement Committee Update Presented by Russ Wilson:**

- In late fall, Mr. Ferron's Strategic Goals were approved. Objective #4: Development and Approval of an updated District Vision Statement. Mr. Ferron asked Russ Wilson, Assistant Principal at Center School, Ellen McLaughlin, Assistant Principal at Cedar School, and Terry Langton, PE teacher at Cedar School and District Dept Head of PE, Health and Wellness to lead the charge. The first order of business was to develop a small and diverse Committee that represents the constituents of Hanover Public Schools. In addition to Russ Wilson, Ellen McLaughlin, Terry Langton, the committee includes Dr. Kim Stoloski, Center School Sped Admin, Ruth Lynch, School Committee and Resident, Andrea Sheehan, HPTA President, and Parent, Ann Coates, High School Social Studies Teacher, and Department Head, and Tom Hogan, middle school Science teacher.
- What is a Vision Statement? The Committee spent a lot of time with this question. It's the soul of the organization. It should inspire an organization to look to the future with hope and purpose. It's a navigational tool, a North Star, for continuous improvement in all that we strive to accomplish in the years ahead. It should be clear, concise, highly ambitious, and most importantly, easy to remember. Doesn't just hang on the wall but is evident and alive in all aspects of the culture and climate of our Hanover Public Schools. – all constituents know why we exist.
- The Committee reviewed our current Vision Statement and researched both local and DESE District Equivalent Schools (District Analysis and Review Tool) to read their Vision Statements. Our current Vision Statement: *The Hanover Public Schools aspire to engage and inspire every child through exceptional instruction, a safe and supportive environment, a culture of creativity, and limitless opportunities to challenge the mind, body, and spirit. Excellent schools will be the primary reason families move into and remain in Hanover.* Research says that a meaningful Vision Statement should be referred to daily, reviewed annually, and updated every 3 to 5 years if necessary. As we are presumably on the other side of this mountainous journey called COVID-19, and as Mr. Ferron says; "This is a perfect time to look ahead with optimism as to what we all truly want for the students of Hanover Public School."
- Tomorrow, a survey developed by our Visioning Committee and an introductory letter from Mr. Ferron are going out to all Hanover Public School parents. Steve Ryerson will be posting the survey link on social media platforms as well as on the school website. We encourage everyone to spread the word! We NEED You ... all of you! Hanover Public School educators, school parents, community members, coaches, town officials, emergency service personnel, and our students in grades 5 to 12. It's tremendously important that we hear directly from them and hope to have them take it as part of a class period during the school day if they'd like. We would like to know what they envision for their future? Everyone has a voice in helping us envision a Hanover Public Schools where our students meet and exceed their potential. BECAUSE our vision for our schools should be and will be a unifier among us. In addition to the digital survey that is embedded in Mr. Ferron's Letter, the Committee is translating the survey into the 13 different languages that are the primary languages at the homes of some of our students. We will send those hard copies home. Thank you, Mrs. Monteith, for sharing a district-wide list of those families. Hard copies in English will also be available in the front office of every school for those who are not technically savvy. Once surveys are received by the end of February, the real work for the Committee begins where we will take all of the information and begin the process of identifying those core beliefs that are deeply held by the residents and employees of Hanover to formulate a draft of a Vision Statement. It will ultimately take 10 months for this group of educators to write a single sentence to create a meaningful Vision Statement. We will be debating words, taking verbs, and verb-based nouns (create / creation -develop / development- appreciate/ appreciation) It is a lengthy and exhausting process if done correctly but it is lifegiving in the end. A Virtual Feedback Forum will be held in early spring where the survey results and hopefully a draft of the Vision Statement will be shared.
- Our goal is to present a recommendation of a new Vision Statement to the School Committee in early June for their approval.

### **Questions/Comments:**

Mrs. Miller thanks Mr. Wilson and added how wonderful everyone is on the committee. She also thanked and appreciated Mrs. Lynch for serving and representing the School Committee.

Mrs. Lynch thanked Mr. Wilson for taking the lead. He did a phenomenal job articulating very clearly what work has been accomplished and what work will continue to be done. She agreed that it should be a simple statement about what we are all about and something that is easy to remember as she does not believe anyone could repeat our current Vision Statement.

Mr. Ferron thanked Mr. Wilson and his team for doing such a fantastic job. He continued by stating he has been asked; “why are you doing this now with all the other stuff going on? Why are we taking this on?” He explains that there are countless priorities and challenges right now but it is important that we are recovering and moving forward. He believes this is a great opportunity to have a unifying activity for our school community.

Mrs. Miller added that she agrees it is a good time to capitalize on that people are so engaged because we have had the most community involvement this year than in the past years in our schools.

Mr. Miraglia agreed there is no better time.

Mrs. Corbo wanted to thank everyone on the committee. She thinks there are some heavy hitters in education and wants to channel the enthusiasm and positivity in a Mission or Vision Statement.

### **Action Items:**

- **New York City Field Trip presented by Kevin Perry:** Mr. Ferron regretfully advised that the field trip has been canceled.

### **Other Comments:**

The next School Committee meeting is scheduled for February 16, 2022, at 7:00 PM. Expected agenda items will be: FY '23 Budget Update – Version 2.0, Peer Leadership, Curriculum Review Health & Safety Update; others TBD.

Motion entertained by Mrs. Miller to adjourn the meeting at 8:29 PM. The motion was moved by Mr. Miraglia and seconded by Mrs. Lynch. Roll Call Vote: Libby Corbo-Aye, Ryan Hall-Aye, Ruth Lynch-Aye, Pete Miraglia-Aye, and Leah Miller-Aye. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted by:

**Tahnee Warner**

Tahnee Warner  
Executive Assistant/ Recording Secretary

### **Documents Used:**

Vaccination Data as of January 31, 2022  
FY '23 Budget Update – Version 3.0  
Preschool Tuition  
Donations  
New York City Field Trip

Appendix A  
Appendix B  
Appendix C  
Appendix D