

***Hanover School Committee Meeting Minutes***  
***March 9, 2022***  
***In-Person and 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, Michael Oates, Patricia Smith, Kelly Lawrence, Matthew Mattos, Dan Birolini, Jane DeGrenier, Garry Pelletier, Matthew Plummer, Mike Perrone, Doreen Crowe, Kathy Hassey, Leslie Molyneaux, Caterina Campo, Lisa Adams, Laurie Heffron, Donny Palmer, Dorsey Yearly

**Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order at 6:01 PM by Mrs. Miller.

Mrs. Miller advised of a slight change to the agenda and added that Mr. Ferron invited special guests who will be joining the meeting via Zoom. Mr. Ferron shared that there will be a special presentation and is grateful to welcome the President of the Massachusetts School of Nurse Organization (MSNO), Ms. Doreen Crowe, and Ms. Kathy Hassey.

Ms. Crowe is extremely thrilled to honor Hanover Public Schools Director of Health Services. She turned it over to Ms. Kathy Hassey, the Scholarship Chair for MSNO. Ms. Hassey explained that every year the MSNO gives out awards and scholarships. This year they had many submissions. She continued by reading a submission they received; “Our Director of Health Services is a nationally certified school nurse who has an overwhelmingly positive influence on the image and role of school nursing. She consistently demonstrates leadership throughout the District by attending Administrative and School Committee meetings and participating in Community Outreach. Her knowledge and calming demeanor are a constant source of reassurance that our administrative team and community have come to rely on. She has effectively managed the school health program throughout this pandemic by collaborating with other community stakeholders and ensuring that all schools have nursing coverage at all times. Each time a new pandemic challenge arose she came up with a way to meet the challenge so we could continue to care for our students to the best of our abilities.” Ms. Hassey continued by declaring this year, the Massachusetts School of Nurse Organization selection committee choose Ms. Patricia Smith as the MSNO School Administrator of the Year for 2021-2022. Ms. Hassey congratulated Ms. Smith and the Hanover Public Schools. Mrs. Crowe added that Ms. Smith is highly respected by her colleagues and peers as a nurse leader and a leader in school health. She has a list of extraordinary accomplishments. She noted that one of the comments in her nomination was the person thought they could go on and on about the attributes that make her an outstanding candidate. They are thrilled and pleased to honor Ms. Smith with this prestigious award.

Ms. Smith thanked Ms. Crowe and Ms. Hassey. Mr. Ferron also thanked Ms. Crowe and Ms. Hassey on behalf of the Hanover Public Schools and expressed how grateful for Ms. Smith to be recognized. He expressed that he cannot thank her enough for how much she worked to support our students, staff, and community through the pandemic and long before that. He continued to thank her team of school nurses and support team within the Health Offices. He added that Ms. Smith not only supported this community but the entire State as a close contact with the Department of Health, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary, and every Health Organization that reached out needing information. The Hanover Public Schools is proud, grateful, and honored to have her and grateful that the MSNO honored her.

Mrs. Miller made a personal note that Ms. Smith is the most tolerant and kind person. She added the definition of tolerance is that others may have opposing views. She and Ms. Smith had their share of them during the COVID-19 process. She thanked her.

Mrs. Miller opened the floor to public comment. She explained, “If anyone wants to speak via Zoom, they need to raise their virtual hand, and I will call on them to speak. As a reminder, the speaker needs to state their name and address.” She received a Public Comment and called on Mr. Joe Colangelo.

## **Public Comment:**

Public Comment was given by resident and Hanover Town Manager Joe Colangelo-190 Winter Street, resident Brian Mates on behalf of the Hanover Unity Council-388 Winter Street, resident and Selectwoman Vanessa O'Connor-43 Mayflower Circle, and resident Lisa Adams-919 Broadway. Concerns were expressed regarding the focus of the School Committee, a statement from the Hanover Unity Council, and the weight of backpacks for students at the Middle School. Please refer to the Hanover Public Schools website for [March 9, 2022](#), School Committee Meeting for more detail.

## **Approval of Minutes:**

February 16, 2022: Motion entertained by Mrs. Miller to approve the February 16, 2022; *School Committee General Session Minutes* as written. The motion was moved by Mr. Miraglia and seconded by Mrs. Lynch. The motion carried unanimously.

## **Report of the Superintendent:**

Mr. Ferron introduced the petitioners with appeals coming forward this evening. He invited Mr. Leslie Molyneaux and the other presenters to speak on their petitions.

### **Curriculum Appeal – Peer Leadership Course @ HHS:**

- Mr. Molyneaux presented his presentation with the [SC Policy KEC Complaint: Anti-Defamation League Peer Training Student Manual](#) which can be found on the School Committee page under [Public Meeting Documents](#) on the Hanover Public School website. He requested that the Hanover School Department immediately cease use of the ADL Peer Training Manual and it be withdrawn from the Hanover Schools curriculum for the reasons cited in the SC Policy KEC Complaint: Anti-Defamation League Peer Training Student Manual presentation.
- Ms. Caterina Campo, Ms. Lisa Adams, and Ms. Laurie Heffron read statements regarding their petition and asked the School Committee to reevaluate the requirements of the State and to consider alternatives for programs to meet those requirements. Ms. Adams invited Mr. Donny Palmer to share his comments to the School Committee. Once he completed his comments, Mrs. Miller reminded the remaining petitions there were three and a half minutes left. After Ms. Heffron presented her statement, another petitioner came up to give her statement. Mrs. Miller explained these petitioners were given twenty minutes and they were out of time. The petitioner handed Mr. Ferron her statement. No presentation was provided.

Mrs. Miller thanked the presenters for speaking at the meeting.

**Questions/Comments:** No questions were asked of the presenters.

Mrs. Corbo did have questions that were raised as part of the appeal for Mr. Ferron. She asked if the Facility Review Committee was provided with the ADL Leadership Manual to which he responded yes. Mrs. Corbo continued by asking if they were provided with the list of the petitioner's objections and Mr. Ferron replied yes. She then asked Mr. Ferron, to the best of his knowledge, if the Committee reviewed the list as part of the review process. He responded yes. Mrs. Corbo inquired if they referred to that when they issued the three-page decision that it is inclusive of the ADL Peer Leadership Manual. Mr. Ferron explained they were tasked with taking the complaint and going through the Manual looking at the course. The Committee reviewed the class as well. She inquired if Mr. Ferron read the ADL Peer Leadership Manual and the list of objections from the petitioners personally before he made his recommendations. He stated he did. She continued by asking if he reviewed the ADL Peer Leadership Manual as well and he replied yes.

Mr. Miraglia's first comment is that back in June the Committee made a statement on *Diversity Equity Inclusion (DEI)* and added that DEI is a small but shiny thread in the fabric of our school system. He continued by stating the School Committee is very committed to and knows that DEI is not the fabric of the world around us. It is in the vernacular of an increasingly competitive global society. They want the students who desire to learn these things and all the facets to have every advantage afforded to them because it is a competitive society. Our commitment to DEI is to give our students the option to gain the skills and the level of consciousness that comes with DEI. His second comment is about special interest and added what we are witnessing across the country is not only an attempt by special interest groups often with political ties to dismantle this work but worse to get teachers and staff to feel pressured and second guess themselves. Even maybe thinking twice about the curriculum and material used. He then noted that we do have two opposing groups with fuller views advising us on what we should be doing on these topics. They are organized groups. His vote is the bucks stops with the School Committee. Special interest groups have no say in our curriculum. If they have an issue with their child's education or the curriculum, there are well-established ways to resolve that and this is not it. He supports the work of Administrators, Department Heads, and teachers. He resumed by stating; "To lead is to choose." He recognizes our educators in their roles as leaders not followers. He repeated what he said at the last meeting after the Superintendent rendered his decision and that is; "To the teachers of this course and the students, keep going and do not listen to this."

Mrs. Corbo shared that other than some very unfortunate personal attacks, people because of the color of their skin cannot discuss meaningful issues of racism, and some disgusting comments about children with disabilities, nothing new was added this evening. She made two motions regarding the merits of the two appeals.

Motion one entertained and moved by Mrs. Corbo to deny the *appeal made by Leslie Molyneaux and the decision of the Superintendent be upheld*. The motion was seconded by Mr. Miraglia. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion two entertained and moved by Mrs. Corbo to deny the statement *filed by the Mother Lode Membership and the decision of the Superintendent and Faculty Review Council be upheld*. The motion was seconded by Mr. Miraglia. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Ferron thanks Ms. Leone for sharing her statement with him and he will share it with the committee. He wanted to address the comments about ADL's legislative agenda relating to school resource officers. He can say with a thousand percent competence, the Hanover Public Schools do not support anything of that nature. Organizations file legislations all of the time of all different varieties. He thinks it is important that the community understands the support he, the administration, and the School Committee has for the Hanover Police. Our Hanover Police Department is admired and respected and Officer John Voelkel has been included in everything the School Department does.

Mrs. Corbo declared as a point of order there is a full agenda that includes a review of our *Special Education Program Audit*. She reminded audience members who were concerned about our students with disabilities that were leaving that they might want to stick around for this part of the agenda.

#### **Health Update:**

- No health updates.

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

#### **Superintendent Evaluation Timeline Presented by Mr. Matthew Ferron:**

- The School Committee Evaluation Process Timeline is done yearly. A draft was included in the School Committees packet for this evening's meeting. School Committee members will need to review the draft and make sure it works for them. If it does not, please reach out to Mrs. Miller and Mr. Ferron. The Superintendent Evaluation needs to be wrapped up by April 27th before the annual Town Elections on May 7, 2022.

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

**2022-2023 School Calendar 1.0 Presented by Mr. Matthew Ferron:**

- The 2022-2023 School Calendar needs to be reviewed by the School Committee so there can be a vote at the next meeting on the first day of school. “We will be working with the principals for the next three months to gather all the pertinent information. The teachers will report on Wednesday, August 31st, and Thursday, September 1st and the students will return after Labor Day on Tuesday, September 6th. The last day is tentatively June 23rd. One big change is the teacher professional development time will be front loading before the kids arrive. There will be no professional development in January. The 2021-2022 School Calendar needs to be voted on at the next meeting for the last day of school. At this time if there are no more snow days, it looks like Thursday, May 23rd.”

**Questions/Comments:**

Mrs. Lynch inquired if contractually teachers’ contract changed to allow the teachers to come back on the 31<sup>st</sup> and does the contract have language regarding the first day of school for students is the Tuesday following Labor Day? Mr. Ferron responded the language is clear that is correct.

**Report of Finance Department:**

**FY '23 Budget Update Mr. Matthew Ferron and Mr. Michael Perrone:**

- There are no additional budget updates following the last meeting. They will continue to refine the budget over the next couple of weeks. More information will be shared in advance of the next School Committee meeting where the Committee will be asked to vote the budget number.

**Questions/Comments:**

Mrs. Miller asked if they will be giving a budget subcommittee statement then and Mr. Ferron responded yes.

**Report on Teaching and Learning:**

**Special Education Program Report presented by Ms. Dorsey Yearley:**

- Mr. Oates introduced Dorsey Yearly an Educational Consultant who conducted a comprehensive independent Special Education Program Review for the Hanover Public Schools. She will present findings and recommendations and take questions from the School Committee. He continued by explaining the discussion for an Independent Special Education Program Review began last year and was presented as one of Superintendent Ferron’s annual improvement goals. Ms. Yearly explained the purpose and structure of the review, key themes, strengths, recommendations, and findings. To see this presentation in full you can go to the School Committee Website under Public Meeting Documents on the Hanover Public School website or by clicking this link [Hanover Special Education Program Review](#).

**Questions/Comments:**

Mrs. Miller thanked Ms. Yearly for the great things we have heard about and how positive it was to have her in our schools. She knows Mr. Oates will keep the committee apprised of what is going on. She added this was something that has been talked about and getting this presentation is exciting.

Mr. Ferron added the slide deck is posted on the website and the [Executive Summary](#) is posted on the website and the [Special Education Report](#) will be posted tomorrow.

Mrs. Miller acknowledged hearing about the staff and how professional and engaging they are, as well as Mrs. St. Ives, and the incredible work with the Professional Development over the last few years. She is thrilled to hear an outside person comment on how they share in their profession, want to engage with each other, and about the

work that has been done over the last few years. She commented that some people did not feel confident and they need an advocate and we could share the expertise that is in the school. She asked if Ms. Yearly had seen other areas of how that would flush out best practices. Ms. Yearly responded by stating there are two ways to go about getting parent feedback. One is to work with your SEPAC and have them come to you and say this is what we are hearing. The other is to gather more informal building-based information. It has to be clear that we may not be able to do everything they want, but we want to hear about it. If we cannot do everything you want, we will tell you why. Ensuring them that we will incorporate, listen to everything you have asked, and if we cannot do it all, you will know why.

Mrs. Hall commented that by supporting the transition process from school to school is definitely a concern among a lot of parents. After reading the report one of the recommendations is that the coordinator or admin position could possibly cross over with the transitioning students. She asked if this is something she has seen in practice in the other districts. Mrs. Yearly responded that she has and there are a handful of districts that do not have the grade level configuration that Hanover has. And some districts have the administrator follow the students for the first year of their involvement at their next school. Mrs. Hall noted the programs being used at the younger grades go from one program to three programs and from three programs to this program. She asked if Mrs. Yearly had any suggestions about narrowing those programs.

Mr. Miraglia shared his enthusiasm that this was done and how great it is with all the support that is there. He thanked Ms. Yearly for the very thorough and balanced report. It exceeded his expectations and it gave a clear view of what is going on. He also thanked the parents and staff who took the time to do this. He hopes that everyone can look at this as a way towards improving services across the board. He thought all the recommendations were great but inquired about which ones would get higher priority. Ms. Yearly thinks getting the administrative piece in place and tasking those people, so the Student Services Director has more time to be in the building and not doing the out-of-district work. He then asked how she would gauge Hanover's level of engagement with advocates and if it is typical in other districts. She responded that she is doing work in several districts and the process is very dense. She feels the fact that over the last four years a survey has been sent out at the close of every IEP meeting and we have received responses that indicate most people feel okay about this. There is a level of anxiety among certain parents that needs to be acknowledged. Mr. Miraglia continued by stating getting some good best practices from other districts would be beneficial.

Mrs. Lynch also thanked Ms. Yearly for the time, energy, and effort she put into this. She believes that Mr. Oates probably already knew the things that were being done well and those that needed to be looked at. This gives validity to the administrators and teachers that are working in the field that someone who is an expert coming from the outside without an agenda, also recognizes their concerns. She was pleased to see how honest Ms. Yearly was and also recognizing the incredible staff we have. One of Mrs. Lynch's concerns was using an advocate and what that brings. She was pleased to hear that our numbers are not that outrageous and right in line but more importantly that this report hit on why that happens. We need to focus on what we can do to reassure parents and to make them feel that we are trying to offer every service available even though the legal aspects of this sometimes confine what we can offer. Mrs. Yearly added that the presence of an advocate at a meeting is not negative and she thinks it is wonderful for parents too. Having someone else besides themselves who can listen to make sure when getting information about your child, and sometimes the parents get stuck on one thing so you cannot hear the rest of what is being said. She agrees with Mrs. Lynch that sometimes special education teachers unintentionally speak in tongues that use acronyms that have not been used for a long time and that we do not realize they are not common knowledge. She thinks the goal is to figure out why some parents feel their cases are better made and better heard when they have an advocate.

Mrs. Hall thinks it is important to acknowledge that 30% of the parents did report they needed outside resources and she realizes it is not every parent but something that would pay attention to. She wants to make sure we are not getting away from the culture of being afraid of outside support coming into help parents. She thinks we should find out why parents need or require those supports and not create a culture where that is negative. She also thinks we need to understand what the need is in our district and why we are not meeting for those needs.

**Action Items:**

- **Information Technology Committee Member Appointment:** Mr. Ferron explained that with Mr. Raab's departure someone needs to be appointed to the *Information Technology Committee* to represent the School Committee. He recommends the committee appoint Mr. Matthew Plummer to service on this committee. His expertise, professionalism, and talent will only make it stronger. He will be joining Mr. Brian Ciccolo as one of the school representatives. We will be well represented on the committee. It is important because it does have a lot to do with strategic planning and long-term funding.

Motion entertained by Mrs. Miller, to appoint Mr. Matthew Plummer to the Information Technology Committee. The motion was moved by Mr. Miraglia and seconded by Mrs. Lynch. The motion carried unanimously.

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

**Other Comments:**

The next School Committee meeting is scheduled for March 23, 2022, at 7:00 PM. Expected agenda items will be: FY '23 Budget vote, 2022-2023 School Calendar first day of school vote, 2021-2022 School Calendar last day of school vote, HHS Program of Studies and the tentative schedule, and others TBD.

Motion entertained by Mrs. Miller to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 PM. The motion was moved by Mr. Miraglia and seconded by Mrs. Lynch. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted by:

*Tahnee Warner*

Tahnee Warner  
Executive Assistant/ Recording Secretary

Documents Used:

School Committee KEC Complaint	
Superintendent Evaluation Timeline	
2022-2023 School Calendar 1.0	Appendix A
Special Education Program Review Presentation	
Special Education Program Report Summary	Appendix B
Special Education Program Final Review	Appendix C