

***Hanover School Committee Meeting Minutes
December 7, 2022 7:00 PM
In-Person and Virtual Meeting
Hanover High School; Media Center***

Present: Mrs. Libby Corbo, Mrs. Ryan Hall, Mrs. Ruth Lynch, Mr. Pete Miraglia, and Mrs. Kristen Cervantes

Absent: None

Also Present: Matt Ferron, Debbie St. Ives, Michael Oates, Mike Perrone, Kaitlin Morelli, Kelly Lawrence, Matthew Plummer, Matthew Mattos, Dan Birolini, Jesse Craddock, Lori Clements, Jane DeGrenier, Andy McLean, Stephanie Murphy, Joel Barrett, Megan, Campia, Nancy Dutton, Jackie Rooney, Mary Cullity, Scott Hutchison, Krissy Maniscalco, Brendan Sullivan, Hanover Girls Soccer Team, Jacqueline Porro

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM by Chair Corbo.

Pledge of Allegiance

Hanover Girls Soccer Team; Division 3 State Champions: The HPS School Committee recognized the 2022 MIAA D3 Girls Soccer Champions. The School Committee commissioned a commemorative banner, using pictures from the State finals, that was presented at the meeting. The banner will be proudly displayed in the HHS cafeteria. Congratulations to Coach Cullity and the entire program on an unforgettable season. Scott Hutchison and Soccer Coaches; Mary Cullity, Krissy Maniscalco, and Brendan Sullivan presented the Hanover Girls Soccer team the Division 3 State Champions Banner on behalf of the HPS School Committee.

A quick recess was taken at 7:07 PM to take a picture of the School Committee with the Girls' Soccer Team. Open session resumed at 7:11 PM.

Public Comment:

Public Comment was given by residents: Lisa Adams-919 Broadway and Adams Financial donated some books to the Hanover Public Schools. Mrs. Corbo directed Ms. Adams to contact the library at each school where she would like to donate the books. Please refer to the Hanover Public Schools website for the [December 7, 2022](#), School Committee Meeting for more detail.

Approval of Minutes:

October 26, 2022: *October 26, 2022 School Committee Open Session Minutes* were tabled until the January 4, 2023 meeting.

November 16, 2022: *November 16, 2022 School Committee Open Session Minutes* were tabled until the January 4, 2023 meeting.

REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT:

- **Policy Section A and B Second Reading presented by Mr. Matt Ferron, Mrs. Kristen Cervantes, and Mrs. Ruth Lynch:**

Mr. Ferron advised the Policy Subcommittee has completed the review and updates for Sections A (The Foundations and Basic Commitments) and B (School Board Governance and Operations) which

will be presented tonight for approval. He added that this was done in consultation with MASC, Administrators, and the Wellness Committee where applicable. The Wellness Committee is comprised of Tricia Smith, Janet Vlassakis, Shelly Ireland, Kelly Lawrence, Terry Langston, Scott Hutchison, and Joel Barrett.

Mr. Ferron concluded that the Policy Committee will be starting on Section I (The Instructional Program) and will begin with discussions on Library Materials. Mr. Ferron also thanked the group of people who have been helping with the library materials. The high school Librarian, Sue McHugh put together a team to help review this material and provide advice on a solid policy. This group is comprised of Sue McHugh, School Librarian, Crystal Monaghan, Technology Specialist and Librarian at Center School, Chrissy Richardson, Teacher at Cedar School Library, Tina McCusker, Teacher and Licensed Librarian at the High School, Adrian McDonald, English Teacher at the High School, Ellen Doyle, English Teacher at the High School, Anastasia DeCotis, English Teacher at the Middle School, Virginia Johnson, Director of the John Curtis-Free Library, Tracy Newman, Hanover Parent and Licensed School Librarian, and Jackie Rooney, Assistant Principal at the High School. They also consulted with Jennifer Varney, President of the Massachusetts School Library Association, and Christie Farrar, Consultant to the Massachusetts Library System and the American Library Association Office of Intellectual Freedom. Public comment and feedback will be taken over the next few weeks.

Mrs. Cervantes started with Section A discussing that the updates and changes made as well as the addition of policy ADF (The Wellness Program).

Questions/Comments:

Mrs. Corbo asked if it was Jim Hardy's recommendation to add the Wellness Policy as she believed it was well done. Mrs. Lynch responded Hanover had one and MASC also had a policy. Both were studied and it was agreed to revise the Hanover policy. Mrs. Cervantes added it should be included and most school districts have a Wellness Policy their Policy Manual.

Public Comment: None at this time

Motion entertained by Mrs. Corbo to approve in form policies *AA through ADD-R* as presented. The motion was moved by Mrs. Hall and seconded by Mr. Miraglia. Roll call vote Peter Miraglia-Aye, Ryan Hall-Aye, Elizabeth Corbo-Aye, Kristen Cervantes-Aye, and Ruth Lynch-Aye. The motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Corbo asked if there has been any online forum commentary. Mr. Ferron responded not yet.

Mrs. Cervantes noted that Section B is being presented "in form" for a vote. Policy BBBE is on hold, which is the policy pertaining to the reorganization of the School Committee when a member resigns. Additional research is being done to make certain that the State guidelines are followed. She mentioned two things to note for the rest of Section B. First is the Policy BDFA - School Council has been updated in partnership with the School Administration of the school buildings. The policy is strong and helps balance the body of the School Council and what they can do and helps each building get the representation and leadership needed from the families that are part of that school. The second piece is the Advisory Committee's role to the School Committee to ensure to name SEPAC directly as a group that has by law in Massachusetts an advisory role for the School Committee.

Questions/Comments:

Mrs. Lynch thanks Mr. Miraglia for his review and efforts in reviewing and giving feedback on this policy.

Public Comment: None at this time.

Motion entertained by Mrs. Corbo to approve in form *Section B through BJ with the exception of BBBE which has to do with the filling of vacancies on the School Committee* as presented. The motion was moved by Mrs. Hall and seconded by Mr. Miraglia. Roll call vote Peter Miraglia-Aye, Ryan Hall-Aye, Elizabeth Corbo-Aye, Kristen Cervantes-Aye, and Ruth Lynch-Aye. The motion carried unanimously.

Please refer to the Hanover Public Schools website for the [December 7, 2022](#), School Committee Meeting for more detail.

- **Policy Section I First Reading of Policy IJL/IJL-R (Library Material) presented by Mrs. Ruth Lynch and Mrs. Kristen Cervantes:**

Mrs. Corbo commented that this will be the first reading of Policy IJL/IJL-R so there will be no vote tonight. Discussion and commentary will be offered during public comment before the second reading in a January meeting.

Mrs. Lynch reviewed that Sections A and B were voted “in form” but will not go into effect until the entire Policy Manual is finished and approved by the School Committee. At that time, the entire document will be dated on that particular night. However, sometimes in the process, the School Committee may decide to accept a policy to become effective immediately after the vote is taken. This decision is based on a variety of factors which is why IJL is being presented tonight. As previously explained the current policies and the MASC policies are compared. After consulting with experts, draft three is presented to the community. Suggestions and comments are welcome by submitting them verbally as well as via the portal or emails for a period of time. It is the Policy Subcommittee hopes that the fourth draft will be released around December 22nd. It will contain some but not all of the suggestions expressed by those submissions. She reminded the community that the Committee can only decide on policy and cannot decide on the procedure. An example is the Library Committee developed a questionnaire that would be used as a form. A community member, parent/guardian, student, or teacher wanted a book to be reconsidered after it is purchased and, on the shelf, a form is going to be used for that purpose. The form will not be in the policy as forms change. If the form is put in the policy, then it has to go before the School Committee again to get the policy changed. After discussion on January 4th, it will be decided if the Committee is ready to vote on that particular policy and if the policy should be effective immediately.

Questions/Comments:

Mrs. Corbo discussed two areas she has concerns about. First area of concern is that once a challenge is filed for a book, leaving the book on the shelf where it can be accessed by any student at any time. She would like the Committee to consider putting a book on restricted access where it is removed from the shelf, if there is a challenge filed for that book, until it has gone through the review process and a determination has been made. The book would still be available to check out and in the catalog. The other area of concern is for consideration on whether or not the form should be part of the policy or not. She finds the form important especially if it is coming to the Committee for final review. The information on the form would be informative and relevant as such the Committee should have a role in what information would be required as part of the Committee’s review.

Mr. Miraglia appreciates all the hard work put into this and added that there has been a number of schools that have experienced these challenges. He believes there has been a lot taken away from the business of education.

Mrs. Corbo asked about the opt-out provision as it is written in the proposed policy; a parent can file an opt-out for a book, but that book would still be available on the shelf to students, but they just could not check it out. Mrs. Lynch concurred. Mrs. Corbo explained that her concern is for a parent

who is filing a request for review because of the graphic sexual content of the book. A parent raising a concern about material that has inappropriate graphic sexual content could be accessed by a student and that is not something that we can put back into a bottle after a child has had access to it and seen it. In her opinion, being respectful and responsive to that parent's concern requires the Committee to evaluate the risk of potential harm that could be faced.

Mrs. Hall agrees with Mrs. Corbo that this would be an issue that is not addressed given the policy as written. Mrs. Lynch responded that number four states that challenged material shall remain in the catalog and on the shelf and be available to be checked out subject to the opt-out restrictions. Her interpretation is that the child cannot check the book out. In addition to that, the parent is filing the form for reconsideration for the materials and asks that within seven working days, the building principal reviews this material, and then a Committee is formed. Within an appropriate amount of time, a decision is made on whether the book will be taken off the shelf and removed from the catalog.

Public Comment:

Public Comment was given by residents: Lisa Adams-919 Broadway. The resident expressed her concern and questions regarding the current opt-out policy. Please refer to the Hanover Public Schools website for the [December 7, 2022](#), School Committee Meeting for more detail.

Virginia Johnson, Director at the John Curtis Free Library in Hanover commented that she fully acknowledges that the Public Libraries mission is far different than the School Library mission but the selection method is very similar. If anybody has questions about any of this, she would be more than happy to answer them.

Mrs. Cervantes read a [public comment](#) from Jennifer Varney, President of the Massachusetts School Library Association, who was unable to attend the meeting. Please click the public comment to see the comment in full.

Mrs. Corbo found it interesting that Ms. Varney said that one person should not have the authority to decide about whether or not a book remains on the shelf. She noted that this is in relation to the building principal. Mrs. Lynch responded there is confusion. What is the role of the principal in the selection of the books? After reading the policy over, the recommendation is not only would the librarian be involved in the selection and the purchase of the books, but also the principal should be involved as well. There's nothing in our district done independently. To say that only the librarians shall decide which books should be purchase, we do not think that acting individually is an educationally sound decision.

Mrs. Cervantes wanted to make sure that the policy at the Committee level is appropriate for all buildings. In some buildings, we have a trained licensed librarian professional, who leads them, and in some schools, it might be a shared responsibility. In the past some schools had a paraprofessional as the person responsible for the library. They want to make sure that the language respects those who have training and experience in book selection and gives them that authority regarding book selection.

Mrs. Corbo asked if they have received any feedback on the portal regarding this policy. Mrs. Cervantes stated that they have not.

REPORT OF FINANCE DEPARTMENT:

- **FY' 24 Budget Projections Draft 1.0 Presented by Mr. Matt Ferron and Mr. Michael Perrone:** The [FY' 24 Budget Projections Draft 1.0](#) document can be found in its entirety on the School Committee website under Public Meeting Documents. Mr. Ferron discussed the budget

process and Mr. Perrone discussed the current status of the developing budget being broken down into three main components. The first component is projecting the level-services salary budget for all current HPS staff rolled forward to FY24. This preserves all current positions. The projected total of all salaries is \$28,967,455. This is an increase of \$909,235, the majority of which has been negotiated with our four bargaining units. The total projected increase in salaries is 3.24%. The second component is determining a level-funded projection of all expenses (non-salary). The expense budget under consideration for FY24 is \$7,174,663. The known projected expenses are slightly higher than last year (\$11,150). They are still evaluating the impact of inflation and increased contracted services expenses as this year moves forward to better inform projections for next year. These expenses remain in flux at this time and may have additional impact. The third component is projected expenses that total \$1,142,330. These proposed expenses include:

- The projected cost of a free Full Day Kindergarten Program (FDK) = \$592,330.
- The projected increase for Special Education expenses including the 14% increase for out of district tuition costs and the estimated increases in special education transportation = \$400,000. *
- The projected cost of additional teachers/service providers to support increasing IEP services - especially in reading and counseling = \$150,000.
- The total increase in our projection is \$1,912,533 which represents a 5.70% increase after applying all expected offsets (Circuit Breaker and grants) **. The estimated total of the additional expenses (\$1,142,330) listed above (1-3) represents a 3.40% increase. The additional costs outlined in #2 above are highly fluid and remain unpredictable - this needs to be monitored. The level service payroll, and level funded expenses, represent an approximate 2.74% increase.
- We are very early on in the FY24 budget building process and there are many factors that can change the proposal as we move forward to a final budget hearing in May. We will update this document as the process continues.

* We are exploring advocacy options for possible legislative relief on these increased costs.

** Prior to offsets, the overall projected increase would be \$2,062,330 (6.14%).

Questions/Comments:

Mrs. Corbo asked if the increase in salaries was lanes and steps. Mr. Perrone noted yes unless there is a degree change but those are budgeted in at about \$50,000 to \$75,000.

Mr. Miraglia commented that you would think that budget projection would stabilize after the pandemic but it only gets more complicated. For historical context, if you look back at all of the budgets over the years, the norms are around 3 1/2%. That reflects historical inflation on wages and costs. This year we are proposing 5.7% and last year, we propose 6.1%. If you look at all the components, the breakdown is approximately for salaries and expenses at 2 1/2%. That is below the 3 1/2% norm. Special education increases were put in at about 4 1/2%. Yes, the state subsidizes this, so we do get a money return but it's always lagging. Whenever we see a big spike like this, we get stuck with it for a year, and then it catches up. If there is a way to advocate the State, we should do that. If it works, that would bring our budget well below 5%. Finally, the superintendent's goal this year is to do full-day kindergarten. That is about a 1.7% increase. If you add those all up after the offsets that brings us to 5.7%. He asked what the next step is. Mr. Ferron replied talking with the town manager in January and then there will be scheduled meetings with Ad Comm.

Mrs. Cervantes summarized that there are three priorities in this proposal. There is a continued investment in our greatest resource, which is our staff which represents 81% to do right by them based on our agreements. There is a commitment to both maintaining and strengthening student

services. We provide particularly for our special education students. Finally, the commitment to moving to full-day kindergarten.

Mrs. Lynch noted that maybe we could develop a Special Education Program in our town that other towns could take part in. She believes that as being a solution to giving the services these children need. Doing this it would cut down on transportation. Mr. Ferron replied that HPS will always remain open-minded

Report on Teaching and Learning:

- **School Improvement Plans: HHS and HMS presented by Mrs. Debbie St. Ives, Mr. Mattos, Mr. Plummer, Mr. Dan Birolini, Mr. Joel Barrett, and Ms. Stephanie Murphy:**

Mrs. St. Ives invited the Hanover High and Middle School to present their School Improvement Plans.

The [School Improvement Plans](#) document can be found in its entirety on the School Committee website under Public Meeting Documents. Please refer to the Hanover Public Schools website for the [December 7, 2022](#), School Committee Meeting for more detail.

Mr. Birolini introduced and thanked the School Council which can be found on the [Hanover Middle School Council](#) page on the Town of Hanover website. Mr. Birolini presented the HMS School Improvement Plan as well as Ms. Stephanie Murphy and Mr. Joel Barrett.

Mr. Mattos introduced and thanked the School Council which can be found on the [Hanover High School Council](#) page on the Town of Hanover website. Mr. Mattos presented the HHS School Improvement Plan as well as Mr. Matthew Plummer.

Mr. Ferron added to the High School early college process that they are working with the South Shore Consortium on getting some additional early college opportunities and working with a lot of colleges and universities around Massachusetts. Starting next year, students should be able to have a few more options. Mr. Plummer will be the liaison.

Questions/Comments:

Mrs. Lynch asked when NEASC will be arriving at the high school. Mr. Mattos replied they would be arriving on Thursday and Friday.

Mrs. Hall appreciates all of the work and the goals and seeing that commitment and the alignment means that you're committed to the work that the superintendent has set forward in his goals.

Mrs. Corbo also added that are other issues that will be worked on that are not reflected in the School Improvement Plan. These issues will be addressed throughout the year.

Mr. Miraglia asked about SCORE and wanted to know more about it. Mr. Mattos responded that it is similar to Naviance, but it is a step above in terms of programming. It does a lot of the self-assessment review, for possible career choices. It helps with the whole process of developing all of the work that they would keep towards college and career applications. It puts it all in little compartments, so it's readily available. Mr. Plummer added it is a digital portfolio that kids can start building right away and have throughout their entire high school career.

Action Items: None at this time.

Public Comment: None at this time.

The next School Committee meeting is January 4, 2023. Expected agenda items will be: FY '24 Budget Update, School Improvement Plans: Center and Cedar, Policy Section I Second Reading of Policy IJL/IJL-R (Library Materials), and others TBD.

Motion entertained by Mrs. Corbo to adjourn the meeting at 9:09 PM. The motion was moved by Mrs. Hall and seconded by Mr. Miraglia. Roll call vote Peter Miraglia-Aye, Ryan Hall-Aye, Elizabeth Corbo-Aye, Kristen Cervantes-Aye, and Ruth Lynch-Aye. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Tahnee Warner

Tahnee Warner
Executive Assistant/ Recording Secretary

Documents Used:

- Appendix A Policy Section A Second Reading
- Appendix B Policy Section B Second Reading
- Appendix C Policy Section I First Reading of Policy IJL/IJL-R (Library Material)
- Appendix D FY '24 Budget Projections Draft 1.0
- Appendix E School Improvement Plans: HHS and HMS