

***Hanover School Committee Meeting Minutes
February 15, 2023, 7:00 PM
In-Person and Virtual Meeting
Hanover High School; Media Center***

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

Absent: None

Also Present: Matt Ferron, Debbie St. Ives, Mike Perrone, Kaitlin Morelli, Matthew Mattos, Matthew Plummer, Dan Birolini, Joel Barrett, Jesse Craddock, Jane DeGrenier, Nancy Dutton

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM by Chai Corbo.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Ferron shared the loss of two important members of our community. Ms. Patty Lasorda and Ms. Joy Tucker recently passed away. Ms. Lasorda was a longtime teacher at Cedar School. She retired in 2015 and had been a regular substitute at Cedar since then. She made an impact on thousands of children over the years. Ms. Joy worked in Hanover for almost 40 years in both the Food Services Department and as a custodian. She retired in 2002 and was 93 years old when she died. He added that the Middle School has an annual award in her memory, "The Joy Tucker Award for Community Service." The criteria for students who receive this award are to have a positive work ethic, make life better for everyone at the Middle School, serve the school positively, be motivated by kindness, be willing to accept, and be ready to help without expecting recognition. We will miss Ms. Lasorda and Ms. Joy. We extend our deepest condolences to their family and friends. Mr. Ferron asked for a moment of silence.

Public Comment:

Residents gave Public Comments: Michelle Gardner-25 Brisco's Plain, Kristen Dillon-49 Trailside Lane. Mrs. Corbo directed them to contact the Middle School Administration. Refer to the Hanover Public Schools website for February 15, 2023, School Committee Meeting.

Mrs. Corbo reminded speakers and the community that the School Committee operates within the confines of the privacy law and Massachusetts General Law. Discussion of student issues and discipline should happen outside of Public Comment, and those concerned should contact the building Principal.

Approval of Minutes:

January 4, 2023: Motion entertained by Mrs. Corbo to approve *January 4, 2023, School Committee Open Session Minutes* as written. The motion was moved by Mrs. Hall and seconded by Mr. Miraglia—roll call vote: Pete Miraglia-Aye, Ryan Hall-Aye, Elizabeth Corbo-Aye, Kristen Cervantes-Aye, Ruth Lynch-Aye. The motion carried unanimously.

January 18, 2023: Motion entertained by Mrs. Corbo to approve *January 18, 2023, School Committee Open Session Minutes* as written. The motion was moved by Mrs. Hall and seconded by Mr. Miraglia—roll call vote: Pete Miraglia-Aye, Ryan Hall-Aye, Elizabeth Corbo-Aye, Kristen Cervantes-Aye, Ruth Lynch-Aye. The motion carried unanimously.

February 1, 2023: *February 1, 2023, School Committee Open Session Minutes* were tabled until the March 8, 2023, meeting.

REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT:

- **Policy Section I; First Reading of Policy IJL-IMG Presented by Mr. Matthew Ferron and Mrs. Kristen Cervantes:**

Mrs. Cervantes announced that this is the first reading of Section I, Policy IJL-IMG. She shared that this section discusses technology. She also noted a few other policies in this section, including the observance of certain holidays.

Questions/Comments:

Mrs. Corbo shared that she looked at other Districts and what they have done with the School Ceremonies Policy. She asked if the Principals and the team of experts had reviewed this draft. Mrs. Cervantes explained the changes that had been made. The first sentence of the second paragraph was changed *“to religious, political beliefs, or freedoms.”* She added that the last paragraph would be the above statements and should not be interpreted to preclude the factual and objective teaching about religions, religious holidays, and political and religious differences. Mrs. Corbo then asked if they used the draft or model policy. Mrs. Cervantes replied that our current Policy was already significantly aligned with MASC's suggestion.

Mrs. Hall commented that Mrs. Corbo's questions aligned with the questions she had. She had no further questions.

Mrs. Corbo asked if the Principals reviewed and provided feedback on the policy regarding teaching controversial issues and speakers. Mrs. Cervantes said they have. Mrs. Corbo asked if the Committee received feedback or commentary from members of the public. Mrs. Cervantes replied that they had not.

Mrs. Cervantes commented that MASC has a Policy for the Department of Education-funded surveys. They do not have a general Policy for surveys and discussion about what is an age-appropriate survey. They believe they will need to make this Policy more robust to fit the needs of Hanover schools.

Mrs. Hall asked if the difficulty of defining a survey drives some of the conversations or if there is a need to determine the Policy. Mrs. Cervantes explained that some problems are not only defining it but if or when a parent/guardian receives a notification so they can opt out. Some of the feedback received is that people want more guidance.

Mrs. Corbo asked if it was possible there would be a supplement policy, and Mrs. Cervantes said yes.

Mrs. Lynch noted that some Policies might need some attention, and a hold may need to “put a hold” on them if necessary. She also asked for consideration on Policy IKF; Graduation Requirements. Mrs. Lynch believes it needs to be more apparent when discussing other requirements that the School Administration may establish. She has received some calls from parents asking about the option to waive specific courses, and she wanted to bring it to the attention of the Committee.

- **Policy Section I; Second Reading of Policy IA-IJI Presented by Mrs. Kristen Cervantes and Mrs. Ruth Lynch:**

Mrs. Cervantes shared that this is the second reading of Section I, Policy IA-IJI. She explained that the feedback given was on the Policy for Summer School. There are now two policies; one on Summer School and the other on Extended School Year. She continued by stating that there were three grammatical changes for the record. The first error is in Policy IHAM-R, Health Education. The end of the first sentence is missing “submitting a request.” The second change is in Policy IAB. The last sentence of the fifth paragraph now reads, “In the event of any disagreement concerning diagnosis, program plan, placement, or evaluation, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be accorded the right of due

process. The word “special” has been removed as well as in many other places within the Policy. The last change is in Policy IJR, Reconsideration of Instructional Materials.” In the first part of the first section, a sentence, and three bullets have been removed because it is in the Library Policy, IJL-R; Library Material. This Policy will focus on Instructional Materials. Policy IJL-R focuses on Library Materials. These changes are in red in [Section I, Part 1; Policy IA-IJL](#), posted on the School Committee website under Subcommittee Documents and Pubic Meeting Documents. She is requesting a vote; in form with those changes on record.

Questions/Comments:

Mrs. Corbo inquired if they received feedback through the forum or any other way. Mrs. Cervantes responded that the Committee received no feedback through the forum.

Mrs. Hall asked if there has been any change to the *Table of Contents* now that the Summer School Policy is two separate policies. Mrs. Cervantes replied that many *Table of Contents* do not match. When the whole manual is adopted, the *Table of Contents* will align with each Policy.

Motion entertained by Mrs. Corbo to approve *in form Section IA-IJI* with the updates 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, Ruth Lynch-Aye, and Kristen Cervantes-Aye. The motion carried unanimously.

- **District Updates Presented by Mr. Ferron:**

- National School Resources Officer Appreciation Day is today, February 15th.
 - He thanked Officer John Voelkel, Chief Tim Kane, and all members of the Police Department who support the schools daily.
- Swatting Incidents in Massachusetts.
 - Today there were swatting incidents, which were hoaxes, in several Massachusetts towns. The District monitors and is in daily contact with what is happening with the Hanover Police Department, Mr. Barrett, and his team. Administrative Assistants were trained in taking calls and responding. There will be extra police cars around for additional presence.
- Middle School Concerns
 - He addressed the comments and concerns voiced at tonight's meeting about yesterday's incident at the Middle School. He appreciates and understands everyone's concerns. The Hanover Police and our partners in public safety have debriefed every incident, including this one. It is challenging and illegal for the District to share certain information. He requests that people afford the District the trust that they know what they are doing. It is a priority to ensure students and staff feel safe and have fun, and he will do what he can to ensure people feel that way. Mr. Birolini and Mr. Barrett will be available to talk to anyone with any questions or concerns.

Questions/Comments:

Mrs. Corbo added that if parent(s) or guardian(s) have concerns, they should contact the Principals.

Mrs. Hall shared that she experienced a hoax in her School District, and she emphasized that teachers' training level is critical. The work that goes on to keep students safe is immeasurable. She understands, as a parent, the concerns and needs for immediate information. Ensuring the safety of every person in that building with every department takes time. She hopes that everyone understands. Mrs. Hall added that she did not understand it fully, no matter how it felt or how much training she had until she lived through it and was in that room.

- **FY '24 Budget Update: Capital Projects Presented by Mr. Matthew Ferron and Mr. Michael Perrone:**

Mr. Ferron shared that last summer, the Town approved funding for the turf replacement and track resurfacing at the high school. The Town Manager signed the work order today, and the work will begin this summer within the appropriate budget. Mr. Ferron received an update on the Cedar Vestibule last week when he met with Victor Diniak, Andrew Cardinal, Chief Kane, and Chief Cavallaro. He added a town meeting article for \$700,000 to authorize borrowing to finish the project.

Mr. Ferron also shared that a grant initiated by the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, which is up to \$50,000, is being worked on and will be submitted tomorrow. Chief Cavallaro, Chief Kane, and the DPW have contributed, and the Town Manager supports it. Notification will come in a month or two, and the funding will become available this fiscal year. Some electrical and HVAC infrastructure projects are capital-related and, under the guidance of the DPW, will be funded using the remaining ARPA funds.

Mrs. Corbo informed the Community that anytime there is a borrowing article, it is a two-thirds vote at the Town Meeting. If school safety is important to you, she invites the Community to come and support that article.

Mr. Perrone added that the Superintendent talked about concerns over the added expense in Student Services, the rising costs of transportation, and out-of-district tuition and the plan to show how the District will offset some of those expenses.

Questions/Comments:

Mr. Perrone added that a new budget will be presented to the School Committee at the March 8th meeting after the Ad Comm Meeting on March 1st. In addition, for the Sped Reserve, there is an article for \$500,000, along with the capital items that Superintendent Ferron discussed. He added that the Governor's budget will be coming out soon, and estimates can be started for next year regarding a possible refund for circuit breaker and earning percentages.

Mrs. Corbo added she reached out to the Massachusetts Association of School Committee's legislative chair regarding Circuit Breaker reimbursement and trying to change some of the thresholds for reimbursement and formula calculations. She is hopeful there might be more momentum with greater legislative outreach and some support from the School Committees throughout Massachusetts. She may ask the Committee to review and approve a letter that can be sent to the Massachusetts Association of School Committees or anyone else. Mr. Ferron noted that he is on the Legislative Committee for Mass Assoc of School Superintendents. They recently circulated a letter that every Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent has signed in the South Shore Lighthouse Group.

The School Committee, Mr. Ferron, and Mr. Perrone discussed the District's position with the budget and the potential plan they are working on. Mr. Ferron and Mr. Perrone will update the Committee as they receive the information on the budget.

- **FY '23 Q2 Revolving Account Report Presented by Mr. Matthew Ferron and Mr. Michael Perrone:**

Mr. Perrone presented the [FY '23 Q2 Revolving Account Report](#), which can be seen on the School Committee website under Public Documents. He shared that the Town Auditors advise using funds from the Lunch Line as there cannot be a high fund balance. Because that line is federally funded, he has been discussing how the funds can be used with the State's guidance. He also highlighted that the Cedar Pre-K and Kindergarten line would decrease to zero as the staff is paid.

Questions/Comments: None at this time.

Report on Teaching and Learning:

- **Overview of District/Student Assessments Presented by Mrs. Debbie St. Ives, Mrs. Nancy Dutton, and Mr. Matthew Plummer:**

Mrs. St. Ives, Mrs. Dutton, and Mr. Plummer presented to the Committee the Overview of District/Student Assessments which can be found on the School Committee website under Public Meeting Documents. For more details, please review the Hanover Public Schools website for the February 15, 2023, School Committee Meeting.

Questions/Comments:

Mrs. Corbo inquired if any Committee Members had feedback on the overviews being presented in a staggered format. The members agreed that they preferred this format. She also noted how much she liked the Early Bird and was interested on how it plays out with the students.

Mrs. Corbo asked about the difference between iReady and DIBELS and why they are given simultaneously. Mrs. St. Ives explained it is about the depth of information you obtain from the assessment. DIBELS is a quick test that is isolated in particular areas: reading and literacy readiness. It is also used for progress monitoring to ensure that the intervention prescribed yields the results we are hoping for. iReady is a more extended, more profound test, and it gives much more information on several particular areas, especially when considering an adaptive assessment. Mrs. Corbo inquired who should parent(s)/guardians(s) reach out to if they have questions or concerns about their accommodations for a student on an IEP. Parents can contact the Principal or Special Education Administrator. Mrs. Corbo also asked if students need more encouragement to take the SATs and ACTs now that many colleges do not require them. Mr. Plummer replied that guidance has a protocol they follow with the student to help them decide.

Mrs. Lynch commented that the chart that was developed was beneficial. It pinpoints the different assessments at each grade level, when and why it's given.

Mrs. Cervantes also commented that she believes there is a misconception that assessment does not equal test. Assessments can happen in many different ways, and it clearly outlines how data is collected and communicated to the students.

Mrs. Hall echoed the importance of acknowledging that we assess students daily, every moment in every question, exit ticket, and warm-up. She is eager to hear how this data is used and how we did it. She inquired if there was an opportunity to offer PSATs to all students. Mr. Plummer responded yes, and they wanted to do pre-COVID; however, that was halted due to the pandemic.

Mr. Miraglia inquired about the Early Bird and if all students take that in that grade. Mrs. St. Ives replied yes, as they use it as a universal screener. Mr. Miraglia also asked what pieces of information should be paid attention to more than others. Mrs. St. Ives explained they could look at it district level, school level, grade level, and individual, which she can share if requested.

Mr. Ferron added that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approved a pilot *Student Achievement Award* designed to recognize high-achieving, high-needs students (students with disabilities, English learners, and low-income students) who scored Exceeding Expectations in English language arts and math in any grade level on the 2022 MCAS. The program also recognizes high-needs high achievers on the MCAS-Alt (a portfolio option for students with the most significant disabilities). Some of you have students who will be receiving Student Achievement Awards. The award packets each contain the following:

- A certificate of achievement.
- A letter of recognition.

- A \$20 Target gift card.
- Ideas to help families support their student's continued high achievement.

The packets have arrived or will be coming soon.

- **Annual District School Choice Vote Presented by Mrs. Libby Corbo:**

Mr. Ferron advised that every year, the Committee must vote before June 1 about whether the District will accept school choice students for the 2023-2024 school year. The results of the vote must be summarized and filed with DESE. The Superintendent recommends a "No" vote for School Choice for the 2023-2024 school year based on current enrollment and class size.

Questions/Comments:

Mrs. Cervantes knows that historically it is voted "no" but inquired if that has always been due to class size and enrollment limitations. Mrs. Corbo replied; yes, because it makes our enrollment and budgeting somewhat unpredictable and unmanageable. She asked Mrs. Cervantes if she wanted the vote tabled for a follow-up discussion. Mrs. Cervantes is ok with taking a vote but noted that many Districts do participate. She would like to have a follow-up discussion with Mr. Ferron to understand this decision more.

Motion entertained by Mrs. Corbo, under MGL Ch. 76 Section 12B, for the Hanover School Committee to choose not to participate in the School Choice program for 2023-2024. The motion was moved by Mrs. Hall and seconded by Mr. Miraglia: roll call vote Pete Miraglia-Aye, Ryan Hall-Aye, Elizabeth Corbo-Aye, Kristen Cervantes-Abstain, and Ruth Lynch-Aye. The motion carried four to one.

The next School Committee meeting is **on March 8, 2023**. Expected agenda items will be: FY '24 Budget Update, Policy Section I; Second Reading of Policy IJL / IJL-R (Library Materials), HHS Program of Studies, and other items TBD.

Mrs. Corbo wanted to follow up on the public comment raised earlier. She said that if anyone has any safety concerns, please address them with the Building Principal, who will be happy to discuss any concerns you have about school safety. Student discipline cannot and will not be addressed at our public meetings. Please understand that the school Building Principal is the best person to address concerns about school safety. And if you can't get a resolution, please get in touch with Superintendent Ferron.

Public Comment: None at this time.

Mrs. Corbo entertained the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:58 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 I, First Reading of Policy IJL-IMG
Appendix A Policy Section I, Second Reading of Policy IA-IJI
Appendix B FY '23 Q2 Revolving Account Report
Appendix C Overview of District/Student Assessments