

Hanover School Committee Meeting Minutes  
June 22, 2016  
Hanover High School

**Present:** John Geary, Ruth Lynch, Leah Miller, Kimberly Booker and Libby Corbo

**Also Present:** Matthew Ferron, Thomas Raab, Debbie St. Ives, and Joan Woodward

**Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chairperson Geary.

**Public Comment:**

- Ms. Darcie Edwards, parent students at Center/Sylvester expressed concerns she has regarding lack of communication with the special education department. She also stated that her children's evaluations, IEP completion as being out of compliance and that service delivery for her child's IEP was delayed 2 weeks due to a backlog in the special education department. If the school is stretched that thin it should be looked at. She also stated she is not the only parent with concerns. She requested the Committee take these concerns into consideration.
- Mr. Geary thanked Ms. Edwards for sharing her remarks and concerns. He expressed his concern regarding a lack of special education hours and lack of response and communication. He requested documentation of where communication fell off so the Committee can review and follow-up where necessary. He asked that Mr. Ferron and Ms. Woodward follow up with Ms. Edwards promptly about services.
- Ms. Edwards is the first parent this school year that has come to the Committee to express their concerns and that he is concerned about the communication.
- Ms. Corbo stated that it's true; this is the first complaint we heard. There might be more to this and requested a report from Ms. Woodward of what services are out of deadline?
- Mr. Geary requested to table this request for now because it will be discussed later. The Committee needs to be made aware of these issues and they have to be documented. Privacy will be respected and parents having issues were urged to bring them to the Committee.
- Ms. Booker thanked Ms. Edwards for coming forth; it was very brave to come here tonight.
- Ms. Scanlon, in response to Ms. Edwards, shared that she is a representative from SEPAC and they can provide her with help and support. SEPAC meets formally once a month and meet informally to support each other.

No other public comments presented.

**Approval of Minutes:**

- Motion by Ms. Lynch to approve the April 27, 2016 Executive Session minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Booker. Ms. Miller abstained. The motion carried with a majority vote.
- Motion by Ms. Lynch to approve the May 25, 2016 Executive Session minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Booker. Ms. Corbo abstained. The motion carried with a majority vote.
- Motion by Ms. Lynch to approve the June 8, 2016 general meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Booker. The motion carried unanimously.

## **Report of Superintendent - presented by Superintendent Ferron**

### **SEPAC Staff Recognition Update – presented by Ms. Scanlon**

- The Special Education Parent Advisory Council asks families for nominations for special education awards for Hanover educators. This year, there were eighty-three nominations: The High School had sixteen awards, Cedar School had twenty-seven awards, Center/Sylvester School had thirty-two awards, and the Middle School had nine awards. There is a wonderful environment of acceptance in this community. It has been a great year.

### **Events and Updates – presented by Mr. Ferron**

- Dr. Raab and Mrs. Degrenier were among the recipients of the SEPAC Recognition Awards.
- Judy Grecco and the office of the North River Watershed Association now have an office at Salmond School. We hope we can work with the North River Watershed to create educational opportunities for our students.
- Anchor TV will hold its wrap up broadcast session tonight.
- The Kurt Giessler Memorial Engineering Suite at the high school was dedicated tonight.
- Ms. Edwards' comments tonight are taken seriously and will be addressed immediately. Any time there is a communication breakdown it is a serious matter. We continue to review budget and work on solutions to ensure we have the right resources in place.

### **Center/Sylvester Building Project Update – presented by Ms. Corbo**

- The schematic design was submitted to MSBA and will meet with the MSBA to discuss this submission. The Building Committee is scheduled to meet in July and a vote on the building project is scheduled for the fall. We will have a booth at Hanover Day with history and highlights of the project. We also now have a Facebook page with information and timelines.
- Mr. Geary asked how we got to the square footage of 26,000 for core curriculum and 7,000 square feet for the special education curriculum?
- Ms. Corbo responded that DESE and the MSBA provide the space requirements based on population of the building. We then negotiate with them based on our educational programming. It is a state requirement. We try to comply where we can and where we can't we negotiate it.

### **Superintendent's Goals for 2016-2017 Draft 2.0**

- Mr. Ferron thanked the Committee for the collaborative relationship that makes the goal process more efficient and productive.
- There will be no vote tonight; this is a draft for discussion and Committee feedback.

### **Goal 1: Student Learning Goal – Explore strategies and options for a potential “academy model” at HHS.**

- We asked our students what career are you pursuing? Twenty to thirty respond each year with nursing, physical therapy, doctors and radiology. We will explore strategies and options to put in place an academy model at the high school where students can choose a pathway they are interested in.
- Representatives from the administration, students, faculty and parents will explore and evaluate what this model might look like.

### **Goal 2: District Improvement Goal – To effectively incorporate all school/town technology expenses into the annual School Department operating budget to maximize resources and reduce reliance on free cash.**

- This is year two of the consolidation of school and town technology departments. We are working with the Town Manager, Dr. Raab, Director of Technology Operations, DPW, Fire Chief, librarians and Police Chief to look at infrastructure and hardware to be built into budgets in the future and to reduce the reliance on free cash.

**Goal 3: Community Engagement Goal - The Hanover Public Schools will develop an effective working partnership with the newly implemented Hanover Special Needs Athletic Partnership (SNAP)**

- The Special Needs Athletic Partnership is(SNAP) getting off the ground offering athletic opportunities to our special education students. Students and members of the community have the opportunity to be mentors. The goal is to make this successful, educate the community, create awareness, and have a communication strategy to do this..

**Goal 4: Community Engagement Goal - The Hanover Public Schools will develop organized lines of communication and a strategic partnership between the School Committee, Special Education Parent Advisory Council Leadership Team, and District Administration.**

- This goal is not finalized because a meeting needs to take place with the SEPAC but we feel this is good for the Committee, Administration and parents. This also ensures we are in compliance with state law. The vision is to create an open dialogue that has structure to it.
- Mr. Ferron thanked Ms. Booker for taking the time to discuss and help create this goal.
- Ms. Booker appreciates Mr. Ferron for taking the time to meet. The SEPAC is an advisory committee to the School Committee.
- The Committee thanked Mr. Ferron and Ms. Booker for working together to create this goal and hope that it can continue and evolve over the years.

**School Safety Goal**

- This goal is currently being discussed with Mr. Galligan and Officer John and will focus on education around teen driving, distracted driving, and younger operators.

**Goal 5: Professional Practice Goal: To develop a comprehensive education plan and advocacy strategy for the approval and funding for the Center School Building Project.**

- Mr. Geary commented on the riskiness of this goal, but that Mr. Ferron should be adding risky goals as a leader. This is another sustainable goal and will evolve into how do we start-up and maintain Center School. It blends the collective goals with one time goal that can be achieved.
- Ms. Lynch thanked Mr. Ferron for updating the wording in the first part of the goal but expressed concern with the way the goal summary is written that if the vote does not pass, this is a failed goal. None of us have control over the vote. She requested Mr. Ferron take a look at rewording it because the goal is really more about developing the educational and advocacy plan.
- Ms. Corbo asked if the Academy Model discussions would trickle down to the Middle School? We should look at creating more challenging opportunities for the students at the Middle School.
- Mr. Ferron responded that it absolutely would. We will explore ways to create some challenging enrichment opportunities.
- Ms. Lynch commented that the AP program has a program for Middle School students and suggested looking at the possibility of a student from a Middle School enrolling in a course at the High School.
- Mr. Ferron responded that Mr. Birolini is looking at the Junior National Honor Society. The point of the goal is to see what all the opportunities out there are.
- There was no vote on the goals but Mr. Ferron will take feedback from the discussion, revise goals and they will be brought back to the Committee for final discussion and vote at the August meeting.
- There was discussion and agreement that the Committee will channel questions, topics for discussion or requests through Mr. Ferron and the Chairperson in order to create efficiency and avoid duplication. This process will allow each request to be reviewed and delegated to the correct Administrator for follow up.

## **Finance Department – presented by Dr. Raab**

### **Donations**

- List of donations was presented.

Motion by Ms. Lynch to accept \$14,423.14 in donations. The motion was seconded by Ms. Booker. The motion carried unanimously.

### **FY '16 Budget Close-out Update**

- All known expense invoices and purchase orders have been encumbered and are included among the encumbrances listed in each category.
- Circuit Breaker funds of \$100,000 were budgeted for FY16.
- There is \$153,000 in unencumbered funds for FY16. Total salary liability is \$238,000 for a difference of \$85,000. The recommendation is to charge the \$85,000 to Circuit Breaker to be used for Special Education tuitions, which is within budgeted amount. The transfer will not be any more than what we absolutely need. This will allow us to rollover remaining \$238,000 in Circuit Breaker to FY17.
- Mr. Geary asked what the average target rollover is for Circuit Breaker? Dr. Raab responded that the target is \$200,000.
- Ms. Corbo commended Dr. Raab for his precise budget planning and the fact that we are not asking taxpayers for more than what we need.

## **Report on Teaching and Learning – presented by Ms. St. Ives:**

### **Trimester Follow-up report**

- A survey was conducted of the K-8 faculty on grading terms. 84% of our staff completed the survey.
- 97% believe the change from quarters to trimesters has been beneficial to the students. 98% feel the change gave them more time to focus on instruction. 95% believe a trimester reporting offered opportunities for parent communication.
- The staff was also asked for the top reasons on why they believe trimesters or quarters better supported instruction. There was a range of replies, those included: for trimesters, there is more opportunity for instruction, continuity of instruction, and trimesters support social and emotional growth, which can be subtle and takes place over long periods of time and increases the likelihood of seeing measurable gains.
- In response to quarters, the survey responses included: four quarters gives students time for a fresh start, complete make-up work, improve from the mid-term and aligns with HHS. Quarters give a better picture.
- Teachers were asked what adjustments they would make to our current grading schedule. Responses included: making sure conferences line up to report cards, change to semester based reporting periods, add mid-term progress reports (Grade 4) teacher ability to view in Aspen if a parent looked at the progress report and Aspen reminder to parents to check student grades.
- Ms. Booker stated her concern that there are no conferences scheduled when the first report card comes out. The teacher feedback was they would like to align conferences with report cards. Her suggestion is to take this into consideration.
- Ms. St. Ives responded that it was discussed and administration felt it is important to schedule the first conference as early as possible in the year so you are not meeting a new teacher until late in the year. Next year's schedule is similar but we will brainstorm how it can be fixed and will take into consideration.

### **Vision 2020 Year-end Report**

- A Vision 2020 survey that focused on implementation, the home connection, and suggestions for improvements was given to staff and parents. Information from the surveys

will be used to refine and strengthen the math program as well as guide professional development for staff.

#### **Faculty Staff Survey results**

- 96% of staff participated in the survey. 95% of the staff feels comfortable with the new math programs. 98% of the staff agreed with the statement "I felt supported during the entire implementation process", 94% agreed the professional development they received improved their practice, 98% of the respondents reported the primary purpose of assigning homework was for reinforcement.
- Eight people responded they did not use the homework. We looked into this and found most were special education students that would not be assigned homework.
- Teacher's suggestions included: further develop math centers, more classroom support, expand RTI model and continue math professional days especially on data and technology of program. Overall, teachers had a good experience with the program and support.
- The Committee thanked Ms. St. Ives and the team for their hard work for successful implementation of the program.

#### **Parent Survey Results**

- Two hundred fifty-two parents participated in the survey
- There were two different surveys; one for enVisionMATH (K-5) and one for CMP3 (6-8)
- 92% (K-5) & 88% (6-8) believe math homework reinforced classroom instruction
- 76% (K-5) & 75% (6-8) believe math homework should be given at least three times a week
- 77% (K-5) & 57% (6-8) Were comfortable with the level of communication
- 82% (K-5) & 86% (6-8) Used online tools less than three times a week.
- 32% (K-5) & 21% (6-8) Heard their child talking about math since the implementation of the program
- Parent feedback for how they can be better supported at home included: holding a math night, more personalized communication, how long homework should take, suggestions of manipulatives, sending Home-School Connection letters frequently, more information on technology tools, teachers and tutors available after school
- The average time being spent on math homework by grade: Kindergarten - under 10 minutes, gr. 1 10-20 minutes, gr. 2 10-20, gr. 3 10-20, gr. 4 10-20, gr. 5 10-20, gr. 6 under 20, gr. 7 under 20, and gr. 8 20-30 minutes.
- Ms. Corbo questioned if parents were asked if they have a tutor for their child? Ms. St. Ives responded, No.
- There was discussion around if the Committee knows tutors are being used, if it may give more insight into if additional classroom work needs to be done to ensure students are understanding new math topics, how we can offer additional support to parents or if some children may need more help in the classroom.
- Ms. Corbo requested that if and when feedback is requested from parents in the future we ask if families are using tutors for math or other subjects.
- Ms. Miller commented that the kindergarten homework time being under ten minutes might be skewed because we cannot see the difference between schools.
- Mr. Geary expressed concern that the use of online tools and the Bounce App was so low and asked if anything is being done about that or if we are implementing a different tool.
- Ms. St. Ives responded that she is not sure that it was promoted enough. She feels that teachers were not comfortable enough to promote it with parents yet. Coaches will be focusing PD on these components next year. Manipulatives parents can use to assist with homework and reinforcement games have all have not been promoted correctly. We are looking at all of this to see how we can improve it for next year.

**Action Items:** None presented.

**Public comments:** None presented.

Next meeting is scheduled for August 24, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. at the High School.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:06 p.m. by Ms. Lynch. The motion was seconded by Ms. Booker.  
Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted

Marjorie Morrison

Documents Used:

Superintendent Goals for 2016-2017 Draft 2.0

Donations

FY '16 Budget Close-out Report

Vision 2020 Year-end Report

Trimester Follow-up Report