

Hanover School Committee Meeting Minutes
January 9, 2018
Hanover High School

Present: Mrs. Kimberly M. Booker, Mr. John Geary, and Mrs. Ruth Lynch

Also Present: Matthew Ferron, Thomas Raab, Deborah St. Ives, Keith Guyette, Anastasia Frank, Jackie Abrams, Ellen Burns, Meghan Caiafa and Meg Breton

Absent: Mrs. Leah Miller and Mrs. Libby Corbo

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm by Mrs. Booker

Public Comment: None presented

Approval of Minutes:

The December 5, 2018 minutes were tabled as Mr. Geary was not at the last meeting therefore a quorum to vote on the minutes was not present.

Report of the Superintendent presented by Matt Ferron:

- **Events and Updates** – “The Mediatrician” presentation will take place on January 10th in the HHS Auditorium. Mrs. Booker questioned the age appropriateness of the presentation. Mr. Ferron replied that it is not aimed towards elementary grades. The installation of cameras at HMS and Cedar Schools proved to be challenging but will be completed in the coming weeks. Kelly Lawrence, Director of the Office of Family and Community Engagement was nominated by the Massachusetts Afterschool Partnership (MAP) to represent Massachusetts at their national conference later this year in New York City. This honor recognizes the work of our entire FACE team and everyone who supports our students in these efforts. Mrs. Lynch requested a School Committee meeting visit following her trip to New York. The 2019-2020 Kindergarten Registration began on January 9th at Cedar School. Dates, times, and complete details can be found on the Kindergarten registration page on our website. As requested at a previous meeting, the current HPS and MASC sample fundraising policies will be included as an agenda item for discussion at the next School Committee meeting on January 23rd. Policies will be updated as requested and brought back to the School Committee at a later meeting for a vote to approve.
- **North River Collaborative Annual Report** – Mr. Ferron stated that the report was distributed to the School Committee members during this meeting. Mrs. Booker questioned what the current changes are in the annual report. Mr. Ferron stated that there are three major focal points: to maintain/update transportation programs, the North River School usage and to maintain a viable high school model. Mr. Ferron appreciates the partnership with North River Collaborative.
- **Superintendent Mid-Cycle Progress Report** – Mr. Ferron provided an update on his 2018-2019 goals, as shown in Appendix A:
 - *Goal #1: Read 2700 District Improvement - The Hanover School System aspires to exceed our current capacity to deliver research based, impactful, effectively aligned, comprehensive literacy skills and strategies for students of all abilities; pre-kindergarten through graduation.* Mr. Ferron stated that the presentation later during the meeting would provide a complete update on this goal.
 - *Goal #2: District Improvement - To successfully phase, plan, and support the new grade level configuration of Center/Sylvester and Cedar Elementary Schools by identifying the most challenging issues for our students, staff, and families over the 2018-2019 school year and addressing these issues in a strategic and systematic manner.* The Sylvester School successfully moved to Center School for the remainder

of the year. The administration staff continually meets and discusses sustainable funding. Dr. Raab is holding meetings with a Transportation Committee and bids will go out once the Committee has determined the best plan for the district. Safety and security work is ongoing with the Police and Fire Departments and alarm companies. Alarm testing continues to be done as well. Staffing is the most complex piece to this project. The administration is currently looking at all elementary staff, specialists, and case loads. Most assignments are close to being finalized. Additional reviews of some special education programs will be ongoing. They are also taking into account licensure to ensure staff is in appropriate grade and position. Teachers from both schools are working together to review educational events such as field trips and in house programs to determine what is best for each grade level. Another group that includes teachers, parents, PTA members, etc. will be formed to review and make decisions about cultural events at each school.

- *Goal #3: Professional Practice/Community Engagement – To develop and implement the use of Podcasts to increase HPS community awareness regarding student accomplishments, district initiatives, and to address any current events that may have an impact on our district.* Several podcasts have been completed including one on HHS Connect and a series with HHS seniors about the college application process, *Destination Graduation*. The *Destination Graduation* Podcast was nominated by HCTV for a Mass Creators Award, and it is one of three finalists. A Podcast focusing on Read2700 is in the planning stages. They are planning to complete another 5-6 Podcasts through the end of the year.

Mrs. Lynch asked as to whether the speed limit flashing lights are necessary on Route 139 now that the Sylvester School has closed. Dr. Raab will speak with the Hanover Police Department.

- **Therapy Dog Policy Proposal** - Presented by Dr. Raab, as shown in Appendix B. Dr. Raab reviewed the Therapy Dog Policies of several local schools as well as Massachusetts law to draft a policy that will meet the needs of the district. Amy Madden, Counselor at Center School has been successful in integrating a therapy dog into the school this year. Having separate policies for therapy dogs and service dogs helps the district make a distinction for the community when animals come into our schools. The Committee was asked to review the proposed policy and direct any questions or suggestions to Dr. Raab. A vote will likely be taken at the next meeting.
- **Center School Building Project Update** - Presented by Mr. Ferron. The Center/Sylvester Schools merge was completed. The school's dedication is scheduled for February 12th at 5pm and is open to the community. The Auditorium will be complete by the end of January.

Report of Finance Department Presented by Dr. Raab:

- **Donations** – Unallocated HPTA donations from 10/24/18 will be reported to the School Committee at a later meeting. Donations were received from Hanover School Families via Baystate Textiles, Hanover PTA and Wells Fargo Community Support totaling \$2,601.00.

Motion by Geary to approve Donations totaling \$2,601.00. The motion was seconded by Lynch. The vote was carried unanimously.

- **New HHS Student Account Authorization** - Hanover High School has been pleased to form the "HHS Students for Soldiers Club" under the leadership of HHS junior Julia Dunderdale and advised by HHS Social Studies teacher, Tim Brown. In December, the Students for Soldiers Club sold baked goods and wrapped Christmas gifts for attendees at the Saturday performance of "Little Shop of Horrors", raising \$290 for the VA Boston Healthcare System. Dr. Raab requested a vote to approve adding the Students for Soldiers Club to the High School Student Activities Account.

Motion by Geary to approve the Students for Soldiers Club at Hanover High School. The motion was seconded by Lynch. The vote was carried unanimously.

- **FY'20 Budget 1.0 Update** – Presented by Dr. Raab, as shown in Appendix E. Dr. Raab stated the formal presentation will be given at the next meeting and these are preliminary budget projections. The School Department is requesting a 4.6% increase for next year. This budget projection adjusts for known retirements and also includes two placeholders for unknown Special Education out of district placements. It also continues our commitment to funding town and school technology as a consolidated effort. These budget projections are best characterized as a maintenance of effort budget allowing the Hanover Public Schools to meet its obligations for next year.
 - Salaries: Negotiations with our Paraprofessionals, Administrative Assistants, and Cafeteria Workers will begin soon as their contracts expire on June 30, 2019. The budget proposal adds one technology desktop support person as part of the five-year technology plan for technology improvements.
 - Expenses: Expenses were broken down according to the cost centers and highlight four main areas. The first main driver in the expense budget among the Reg/SpEd Non FTE Salary cost center replaces \$49,000 that was transferred in September for teacher salary column adjustments. These are expected and it's important to budget for them. The second main driver in Contracted Services are obligations with regard to Special Education placements that began this year. The third main driver in the expense budget includes \$50,000 in additional Equipment for technology so that we remain on a planned replacement schedule for computers, laptops, printers, etc. The fourth main driver is in the Tuition line. Funds were added for two unanticipated out of district placements at \$70,000 each in order to plan for future needs.

Report on Teaching and Learning:

- **READ2700 UPDATE: Needs Assessment Presentation** – Presented by Mrs. St. Ives along with the IST (Instructional Support Team) comprised of coaches and reading specialists. The Team formed in August of 2018 by reviewing the Needs Assessment and networked with other towns. The presentation is posted online as Appendix F.
 - Overview: Presented by Anastasia Frank. Discussed the Five Components of the Written Language: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Vocabulary, Fluency and Comprehension.
 - Balanced Literacy Approach: Presented by Jackie Abrams. Discussed the Four Components: (1) *Phonemic Awareness, Phonics & Word Study which focuses on Explicit Modeling of Reading and Thinking Behavior*; (2) *Interactive Read Aloud that focuses on Teaching Point, Language Development, Explicit Modeling of Reading & Thinking Behavior*; (3) *Reader's Workshop which focuses on Teaching Point, Explicit Instruction, Guided Practice, Independent Practice & Accountable Talk*; (4) *Writer's Workshop which focuses on Teaching Point, Explicit Instruction, Guided Practice, Independent Practice & Accountable Talk*.
 - Tiered Instruction: Presented by Ellen Burns. Discussed the three tiers of learning. Tier 1: Core Instruction; Tier 2: Supplemental & Core; Tier 3: Intense & Core. Mrs. St. Ives added that each tier is included within the next tier, thus creating inclusion amongst students.
 - Needs Assessment: Presented by Meghan Caiafa. Discussed the two reading assessments in professional development submitted by Dr. Ilda King and the TLA (Teaching and Learning Alliance).
 - Our Approach: Presented by Meg Breton. Is this right for Hanover? Our goal is to prioritize strengths and move forward.
 - Overall Strengths: Presented by Ellen Burns. Hanover's strengths include: Schools/communities that care and are invested in students, technology/resources available, learning standards aligned with report cards, phonics taught in grades K-2, tiered instruction based on needs and teacher expertise in various areas.

- Priority Actions: Presented by Meg Breton. Hanover's action points completed are: TLA Workshop Model for grades K-8, lab teachers work with ELA, Instructional Design Plans for grades 5-8, grades K-5 reading calendar outline, updated high frequency word lists, defined balanced literacy, district-wide calendar of learning targets & established IST.
- Ongoing Work: Presented by Anastasia Frank. Hanover's potential completions: elevated instructional practices, training in test administration/multisensory reading, build diverse classroom libraries, data driven instruction, strengthen interventions and be consistent with delivery.
- Vision: Presented by Meghan Caiafa. "Our vision is that each of our 2,700 students, of all abilities, will reach and exceed their individual capacity to become skilled and enthusiastic readers for life."

Mr. Ferron appreciated the effort by the Instructional Support Team and the leadership of Mrs. St. Ives. The staff sincerely appreciated their dedication and sees it in the students.

Mrs. Booker appreciated the district's definition of Balanced Literacy approach as it includes the five essential components of reading instruction. She looks forward to the District's implementation of these goals. She questioned use of reading assessments among the early grades when iReady is not used. Ms. Abrams replied that monitoring is done thru DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) and BAS (Benchmark Assessment System) for students that have not met the Benchmarks for each grade. Ms. Frank added that progress monitoring is used to determine instructional need for tier placement.

Mrs. Booker inquired as to what grade DIBELS are no longer used. Ms. Abrams responded that iReady monitoring is done and DIBELS may continue to be used in the later elementary grades. Ms. Burns added that teachers watch the student's progression within each grade and compare to the national norm.

Mrs. Booker questioned if there are special education teachers within the "Lab" teachers. Mrs. St. Ives responded that the teachers vary from school to school but are present in each grade. Ms. Breton added that the lab and special education teachers watch and learn from each other.

Mr. Geary appreciated the collaborative effort from the IST group. He questioned as to what Hanover's approach to Balanced Literacy is. Ms. Abrams replied that a working definition is an approach to teach literacy, and integrate authentic reading and writing experiences along with systematic instruction.

Mr. Geary requested that understanding "nonsense" words should be translated into layman's terms for the average family. Ms. Frank responded that nonsense words are only used as a gauge assessment for applying decoding skills. Ms. Abrams added that nonsense words are simply codes for larger words of the same meaning.

Mrs. Booker added that defining the essential components of reading should be elaborated on for complete parental understanding.

Mrs. Lynch appreciated the presentation and focus on the student's reading. She commended the team on the District's goal to improve reading and writing amongst all students. She questioned where the IST (Instructional Support Team) program is mostly needed. Mrs. St. Ives responded that each teacher's schedule varies based on tier placement. She appreciated the team's data assessment process and applying that information. Ms. Frank replied that once a teacher has all the knowledge about a student then that is applied on a daily basis. Mrs. Lynch also questioned how to teach vocabulary to 4th graders. Ms. Burns replied that word choice is focused towards words in which their meanings cross over many subjects.

Mrs. Booker questioned whether vocabulary words are connected into one reading/writing lesson. Ms. Breton responded that guided reading pieces are focused on that particular phonics structure. Also, she questioned as to what grade "Foundations" is no longer being used. Mrs. St. Ives replied that it is used through second grade.

Mrs. Booker questioned as to whether writing will also be focused on this year. Mrs. St. Ives noted that reading is the focus this year and both reading and writing over the next school year. The team will participate in a guided visit at a local school that teaches with this approach.

Mrs. Booker questioned how to approach students who are not reading/writing at grade level. Mrs. St. Ives responded that continuous reflection amongst faculty is needed in order to address this issue.

Action Items:

- **Update on Sylvester School** – Presented by Mr. Ferron. School Committee will need to vote stating that the Sylvester School is no longer needed for educational purposes, which is the beginning of a process. The School Committee will retain jurisdictional power of the building until Town Meeting. The status of the school will then move for discussion at Town Meeting through a series of Articles. Options at Town Meeting could be to lease or sell the building, demolish the building for open space, or the Town retains the building as is.

Mr. Geary commented on the Hanover Mariner reporter's professional responsibility to include the READ2700 Initiative in his article along with the Sylvester School decision.

Mr. Geary suggested the Committee move forward with the procedural vote tonight but urged the Committee to write-up commentary on the Sylvester School decision. The Town cannot offer bids to developers until the Selectmen have possession of the property. Once voted on, the School Committee will defer its power over the building to the town of Hanover. The supporting information behind the Town Meeting Article can come from the School Committee.

Mrs. Lynch questioned why the School Committee would give up the Sylvester School Building. Mr. Geary responded that it is the School Committee's responsibility to begin the process for what happens to the building. The present panel questioned as to whether the full committee should meet on this matter prior to voting. After confirming that Town Meeting will make the decision on the building it was decided to move forward with the procedural vote. The Committee agreed to discuss creating the supporting commentary for the Town Meeting Article at the next meeting.

Motion by Geary to declare that the property known as Sylvester School at 495 Hanover Street in Hanover Massachusetts is no longer required for School Committee purposes and to notify the Selectmen that such property is no longer required for such purposes. The motion was seconded by Lynch. The vote carried unanimously.

The next School Committee meeting is scheduled for January 23, 2019 at Hanover High School. Mr. Ferron stated that the topics might vary due to Committee attendance.

Expected Agenda Items will be:

- FY'20 Budget Presentation 1.0
- HHS Assessment Presentation (MCAS/AP/SAT)
- Fundraising Policy Updates
- Vote to Approve the Therapy Dog Policy

Mr. Ferron added that due to the upcoming FY'20 Budget Presentation 1.0, the HHS Assessment Presentation (MCAS/AP/SAT) be moved to a later meeting.

Motion by Geary to adjourn at 9:05 pm. The motion was seconded by Lynch. The vote carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Tara L. Wakefield

Recording Secretary for the Hanover School Committee

Documents Used:

Superintendent Mid-Cycle Progress Report
Therapy Dog Policy Proposal
Donations
New HHS Student Account Authorization
FY'20 Budget 1.0 Update
READ2700: Needs Assessment Presentation

Appendix A
Appendix B
Appendix C
Appendix D
Appendix E
Appendix F