

***Hanover School Committee Meeting Minutes  
February 6, 2019  
Hanover High School***

**Present:** Mrs. Leah Miller, Mrs. Kimberly M. Booker, Mr. John Geary, Mrs. Libby Corbo and Mrs. Ruth Lynch

**Also Present:** Matthew Ferron, Thomas Raab, Deborah St. Ives, Keith Guyette, Robert Murray, Matthew Paquette, Matthew Plummer

**Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order at 6:46 pm by Mrs. Miller.

Motion by Booker to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations with non-union personnel with the intent to return to General Session. The motion was seconded by Geary. Roll call vote: Ruth Lynch - Aye, Kim Booker - Aye, Libby Corbo - Aye, Leah Miller- Aye, John Geary - Aye.

Mrs. Miller called general session to order at 7:00 pm.

**Public Comment:** Mr. Gavin Little-Gill thanked the Committee for making the high school presentation for MCAS, AP and SAT scores a priority to show how well Hanover students are prepared for college and careers. He requested that future presentations include an AP trend analysis by the number of students, by score, aggregated by scores of 3-5 scores and 4-5 scores as this is how many schools give credit for classes. Also, to compare scores against Massachusetts averages for each subject. He would also like to see a comparison of Hanover to local private schools and demographically similar public schools across AP participation rates, SAT scores and graduation rates. The Committee commented that it may be helpful to submit questions prior to the meeting so the team can address them during the meeting going forward. Mrs. Lynch commented that she previously stated it would be beneficial to look at the scores compared to private schools but that we should also look at the variety of courses we offer at HHS versus what is offered at private schools. There are several factors that can affect AP scores, including allowing only certain students or students with certain grades into AP courses, which Hanover does not do but other schools may. Mr. Little-Gill commented that by looking at participation rates or at trends relative to averages it may show areas that need improvement or where we are doing well that we should try to replicate in other courses.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Motion by Booker to approve the January 9, 2019 School Committee minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Geary. The vote carried unanimously with an abstention by Corbo and Miller.

Motion by Geary to approve the January 23, 2019 School Committee minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Corbo. The vote carried unanimously with an abstention by Booker.

Mr. Geary made the following statement: "I would like to make a statement to correct the meeting minutes from the School Committee Meeting on January 23, 2019. On January 23<sup>rd</sup>, during a conversation with the Advisory Committee liaison to the School Committee, I was incorrect in my statement that the Ad Com should only make recommendation regarding the financial impact to the town of each warrant article and has no authority for strategic recommendations. The Town of Hanover By-laws 4.1, Section 3 reads, *After due consideration of each article in the warrants submitted to it, the Committee shall report thereon to the Town Meeting such recommendations as it deems for the best interest of the Town*". I have communicated with the Ad Com Chairman and he has accepted my apology for misunderstanding the by-laws and the written responsibilities of the Ad Com. The chairman has offered to make himself available at a future date to further explain the roles and responsibilities of the Ad Com if the School Committee deems it necessary."

**Report of the Superintendent presented by Mr. Ferron:**

- **Events and Updates** - The *Destination Graduation Podcast* won the 2018 Mass Creators Award last week. Congratulations to the Hanover Community Television staff Colleen and Nicole and to our students Alex Stacy, Alyssa Nee, Kat Lawrence, Alex Cusick, Drew Carroll, Justy Carney and Haraden Bottomley who helped make this Podcast possible. The newest podcast *The Power of Growth Mindset* was released this week. Kerrie Capraro and Steve Lovell, teachers at Center School, transformed the presentation they did last year for staff and parents into this informative podcast for all families. Mr. Ferron thanked Steve Ryerson for his assistance on the podcast.
- **Center School Building Project Update** - Presented by Mrs. Corbo. The project is wrapping up and the building dedication is February 12, 2019 from 5:00-7:00pm. There will be a brief speaking ceremony followed by a reception and building tours. Everyone is invited to attend.
- **MSBA Application: Cedar School Roof** - Presented by Mr. Murray, Facilities Engineering Manager. Mr. Murray is submitting a Statement of Interest (SOI) to request Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) funding to replace the Cedar School roof. In 2015, an Article was passed at Town Meeting to make necessary repairs to the Cedar roof but it was determined during the project that new roof was necessary, so the project was cancelled. The roof is now 20 years old, meeting the MSBA requirement to request funding through their Accelerated Repairs Program. The MSBA requires specific language in a motion by the School Committee upon submission of the SOI.

May it be resolved that having convened in an open meeting on February 6, 2019, prior to the SOI submission closing date, the School Committee of Hanover, in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated 2/15/19 for the Cedar Elementary School, located at 265 Cedar Street, Hanover MA, which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority categories for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future, namely replacement of the school room, pursuant to SOI Priorities 1 and 8, as pertaining to the unsound structural condition of the roof as well as its energy inefficient thermal properties; and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the City/Town/Regional School District to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

Motion by Booker to approve the statement as read. The motion was seconded by Geary. Motion carried unanimously.

**Report of Finance Department: Presented by Dr. Raab.**

- **Vote on Contract Extension: Assistant Superintendent** - The Committee expressed their gratitude to Mrs. St. Ives and that they hope she will be with the district for a long time. Mrs. St. Ives thanked the Committee for their support and confidence.

Motion by Booker to extend the Assistant Superintendent's contract until June 30, 2022 and authorize the Superintendent to enter into contract negotiations within the financial parameters established by this Committee in executive session, prior to open session. The motion was seconded by Geary. The motion carried unanimously.

- **Donations** - Donations totaling \$3,785.00 were received from the HPTA and Harvard Pilgrim HealthCare. HPTA donations are above and beyond what was approved by the Committee in October.

Motion by Booker to approve the donations of \$3,785.00 for February 6, 2019 as presented. The motion was seconded by Geary. Motion carried unanimously.

- **FY'19 Budget Update** - Dr. Raab explained, as shown in Appendix B, that 53% of the FY'19 Budget has been spent, as expected. He highlighted the \$-349,000 in special education expenses. A transfer of \$187,000 from Circuit Breaker was recently processed leaving a \$-161,000 balance. There is still \$128,000 unspent in Circuit Breaker. Dr. Raab and building administrators will be keeping a close eye expenses for the remainder of the year. He will look to the Town for support of a Special Town Meeting Article for the difference in Chapter 70 funds that the Town took in versus what we budgeted. The Town Manager and Finance Director are supportive and understand the rationale for the request. Unspent funds will remain in the Circuit Breaker account for reserves for next year. Dr. Raab explained that unanticipated expenses include not being able to anticipate required student services prior to IEP meetings, students who move to Hanover who require special education or support staff or a move in that requires out of district education. Unanticipated expenses are the biggest variable in the budget process. Mrs. Corbo stated that these are not because of a lack of planning on the administration but truly unanticipated costs.
- **FY'20 Budget 2.0** - Dr. Raab began with Appendix C. He reminded the Committee that Budget 1.0 was for \$29,381,000. After meeting with the Town Manager and Finance Director the school department has been asked to reduce the budget by \$161,500. Budget 1.0 included \$140,000 in special education tuition placeholders. In 2017, the Town voted to create a Special Education Reserve Fund which the school department we will put forth an article at this year's Town Meeting requesting \$210,000 be put into this fund. The additional funding will come from reducing the Cedar School security and bathroom articles, which is feasible without affecting school security and focusing only on the four bathrooms most in need of upgrades. The Board of Selectmen have approved adding \$210,000 as annual article for Town Meeting and if passed will required both School Committee and Board of Selectmen vote to release the funds. The Town Manager added \$28,500 to the school department budget for town-wide. With the reduction of \$161,000 in Budget 2.0, the school department will receive a 4.04% increase. Mrs. Booker asked if they can expect to fund the Special Education Reserve Fund annually. Dr. Raab replied that it will depend on expenses realized next year and that Circuit Breaker would always be spent first.
- **Transportation Bid Update** - Presented by Dr. Raab. The regular education transportation contract is expiring June 30, 2019. After several meetings of the Transportation Committee, it was determined that there is no need to change the times for our elementary schools for next year and going forward. The time between Cedar and Center Schools is approximately five minutes which will allow for morning drop offs and afternoon pick ups to take place in "shifts", similar to how it was handled when Center/Sylvester was two buildings. Seventeen buses will be maintained. Dr. Raab will include language in the contract that buses must not be more than five years old and all buses will have 2-way radio communication installed. All other safety features will remain in the contract. He expects the bid to go out by vacation.

#### **Report on Teaching and Learning:**

- Mr. Paquette shared that the *Destination Graduation Podcast* came about after the "College Boot Camp" workshop this summer. He has enjoyed learning from the students involved and watching them grow. They are soliciting questions about the college application process to be discussed during Episode 9. Email questions to: [destinationgraduation@hanoverschools.org](mailto:destinationgraduation@hanoverschools.org). There was discussion about expanding the podcast to include students who may be joining the military or chose other paths.
- **HHS Assessment Presentation (MCAS/AP/SAT)** - Presented by Mr. Paquette and Mr. Plummer. The presentation can be found online under public meeting documents as Appendix D.
- **MCAS** - The data presented was for the Spring 2018 MCAS for the current junior class. Results were presented by the Class of 2020 as a whole by subject and then broken down to special education students. Results are categorized as Advanced, Proficient, Needs Improvement and Warning/Failing and students must pass the MCAS in order to graduate. 89% of students scored advanced or proficient

with 50% of special education scoring advanced or proficient in STE (Science, Technology and Engineering). 85% scored advanced or proficient in Math with 33% of the special education subgroup falling in the failing category. 96% of students, and 71% of the special education subgroup, scored advanced or proficient in ELA (English Language Arts), with no students failing. Mr. Plummer explained how for students who were failing and required extra supports, interventions were created that involve general education and special education teachers, as well as administrators. He explained how when the team was reviewing results, there wasn't a particular problem with the curriculum that stuck out as being problematic. Each student needed individual supports, with some needing help in a specific subject, some social emotion support, some on test taking. Most of the supports needed were for close reading, regardless of subject. The retest for the 33% of students in the failing category is down to only 3 students and some students went from 216 to 240 showing the interventions are working. Most interventions were given during the academic strategies course, study halls, before and after school and tried not to interfere with academic core classes. Mr. Paquette explained that test anxiety played a role in some cases, especially if the student has to take the retest. To help prevent anxiety, they get students as many accommodations as possible from the state and also have a person/adult in the building that students have a relationship with and understands their quirks proctor the test. In the past 10 years, there has never been a student not graduate due to failing the MCAS.

- **AP (Advanced Placement)** - Although this is a national exam, classes can be personalized by the teacher while still meeting the national standards set by the College Board. Scores are weighted with 1 being the lowest, 3 the cutoff point, and 4/5 being the ultimate targets. Some colleges grant credits based on AP scores although requirements vary by school. Students and exams are exclusive with many students taking more than one exam. Mr. Paquette commented that not only have the number of students taking AP courses and the number of exams increased over the past six years, but so has the average number of exams per student. Of 257 students who took AP courses, 176 students earned a qualifying score of three or higher. He went on to review data for the 2018 exams, 2018 averages and HHS historical averages for English, Fine Arts, Foreign Language, Math, Science and Social Studies.
- **SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test)** - So far this year, 80% of seniors have taken the SAT. The Class of 2019 average score is a 1092; 548 english and 544 math. The College Board sets benchmarks indicating if a student is college/career ready. 58% of seniors have met the benchmarks, which is almost identical to the state and above nation. 95% of seniors in Hanover take the SAT compared to 77-80% in the state and only 60% in the nation. He continued by reviewing the Class of 2018 which is now complete. The average score was 1138; 570 english and 567 math, which are also above the state and national averages. 68% of students from the Class of 2018 met the benchmark.
- At the conclusion of the presentation Mrs. Lynch commented that she was happy to see that 85% of students were advanced/proficient in math (MCAS) where at one time we were below the state. Mrs. Miller asked what percent of total AP course Hanover offers. Dr. Walsh responded that Hanover offers 19 out of 38 courses, or approximately 50%. There was a brief discussion about what is more meaningful and will benefit students more, to offer the challenging AP courses to many students or to offer courses to only small groups of students to increase the scores where upper level colleges only accept scores of 4 or 5. Mr. Paquette stated he believes at HHS both should remain the goal and can be achieved. Mrs. Lynch commented that most important is the fact that HHS students are going to college, getting jobs etc. She recommended that administration make careful decisions if they were to ever limit the numbers of students in AP courses. Mrs. Lynch stated she hopes to see an increase in the SAT math scores in a few years with the new math program in place at the elementary and middle schools. Mrs. St. Ives commented that although there isn't enough data yet, it is intriguing that there were significant gains in the elementary math MCAS scores and that they will keep a close eye on data over the next few years. Mr. Geary asked to look at data showing how many students get accepted "X" school where they may not have been accepted without taking the SAT and what are the top schools where students are most accepted. He would like to see a shift from always using ivy league schools as the benchmark. Mr. Plummer commented that guidance should be able to provide this acceptance data. Mrs. Corbo commented that while Hanover is within ten points from Abington and Rockland when looking at DESE SAT data, there is a 50 point disparity from Pembroke and Norwell and that she would like to see SAT scores increase. Mrs. Booker asked if the close reading

skills are something that can be taught to students district-wide. Mr. Plummer responded that teachers are working hard with students on this skill, especially in math and science.

- Mr. Little-Gill thanked the Committee and presenters for a great conversation about opportunities for Hanover students. He commented that AP credits for colleges is available from the College Board. He requested information about how curriculum is being aligned between honors and AP courses and what initiatives, professional development, etc. is being conducted to create collaboration between honors and AP courses. Mrs. Miller asked the team from the high school to connect offline with Mr. Little-Gill to answer his questions. Mr. Ferron commented that the team can pull together some data around the general overall acceptance rate versus acceptance rates for Hanover and see where Hanover stands against itself. If there is something to make Hanover more competitive, it should be explored.

**Action Items:**

- No items at this time.

The next School Committee Meeting will be on February 27, 2019. Expected agenda items are: Q2 FY'19 Revolving Account Update, FY'20 Budget 3.0, Superintendent Evaluation Timeline Review, 2019-2020 School Calendar Draft 1.0

Motion by Booker to adjourn at 9:17 pm. The motion was seconded by Geary. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Rachael O'Callaghan

Rachael O'Callaghan

Recording Secretary for the Hanover School Committee

**Documents Used:**

Donations

FY'19 Budget Update

FY'20 Budget 2.0

HHS Assessment Presentation

Appendix A

Appendix B

Appendix C

Appendix D