

HANOVER HIGH SCHOOL  
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January 18, 2022

Hanover School Committee  
% Hanover Public Schools  
188 Broadway  
Hanover, MA 02339

Upon request of Superintendent of Schools Matthew Ferron, the undersigned members of the Hanover High School Faculty Council, have reviewed the Peer Leadership Seminar elective course known to us as the *World of Difference* class (inclusive of the Anti-Defamation League's *Peer Leadership* and *No Place for Hate* manuals) and have found the course to be in keeping with the Hanover High School Mission Statement, the Hanover High School Core Values and Beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Expectations of Hanover High School. It should be duly noted as well, that our teachers and HHS administrators are firmly behind this elective course and the training components that are part of the total class experience. This course, and the training included, was discussed by this Council during multiple meetings, and work on this document went through each member for total inclusion of all thoughts. We fully believe that this class is an important component of the full educational experience at HHS for students who elect to further develop their leadership skills to better themselves, our school, and our community. Additionally, we fully expect to support this course in the years ahead, using the lessons learned as part of this pilot year, to ensure that there is a continued positive impact on our school community.

Below, please see the course description as it appears in the 2021-2022 Hanover High School Program of Studies:

*265 PEER LEADERSHIP SEMINAR, 5.0 credits/year*

*The students in this class will be trained by the Anti-Defamation League's World of Difference peer trainers. The training will provide students with the skills and resources necessary to design and lead interactive projects for their peers and other students. The role of a student in the Peer Leadership Seminar is to create and run educational projects for their peers and to promote and model civility and respect. Students must have the willingness to take a stand against prejudice and be willing to make a commitment to creating a positive social atmosphere at Hanover High School. Each student will be responsible for participating in several school-based projects throughout the year. The mission of the*

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*Peer Leadership Seminar is to reduce stereotyping and prejudice and increase acceptance of individual differences. This course is graded as Pass/Fail.*

The training referred to in the first sentence above is an in-school, 3-day training conducted at Hanover High School. The manual aligned with this course is extensive, 300 pages of examples of leadership in action, far too many activities that could possibly be implemented or completed in one school year. Our goal has always been to identify a few of those activities which best suit our students and the teachers' pacing and sequencing of the course. A few of the options or statements in the manual may be considered controversial in nature, and the belief that all of these activities would be utilized is premature, and were never intended to be a part of this pilot class. The teachers of this course, with the support of the administrators, are licensed and certified professionals who were chosen due to their specific expertise to help their students engage in this very valuable work, and their insightful and reflective judgment on any advocacy work should be respected and not prejudged.

We feel strongly that this elective course, albeit in its pilot year, will be a major benefit to our school community. As always, new courses at HHS are reviewed throughout the pilot year and any adjustments will be made for the following school year.

In our estimation, this elective course will provide our students with an environment to further explore what it means to be a leader, to review characteristics of successful leaders, and to research various leadership styles. In essence, this class affords us an opportunity to develop how HHS defines a student leader. A course of this nature endeavors to have a major impact on reducing instances of bullying, cyberbullying, and identity-based bullying in our school due to the manner in which student leaders will learn anti-bullying strategies that they will be able to communicate to their friends and peers within appropriate settings. This is important work that this faculty council agrees is essential to the comfort and acceptance of all students at HHS.

This class offers our students an opportunity to understand their own leadership strengths and weaknesses. They will be able to work on their own leadership skills (specifically ones they identified as areas where they may want to improve) through a variety of class-based projects. Students will also be presented with in-class opportunities to reinforce important characteristics of leadership through weekly challenges and class-based discussions on many topics, including commitment, patience, humility, selflessness, kindness, respect, honesty, and forgiveness.

The class will also evaluate leadership styles and effectiveness through a review of several different forms of media offerings. As with all media offerings, constructive post-discussions will be encouraged and supported. Additionally, students will engage in projects that promote a positive school culture and atmosphere for all students at HHS; their leadership efforts will render tangible evidence of their college and career readiness.

At this time, our intent is to focus on the work in the classroom and if possible, the remaining training for both the World of Difference and the No Place for Hate coursework as determined by the teachers, with guidance, support, and input from the HHS administration. Any activities that may include students from outside of the class, either for training or peer led activities, will only be done with adult

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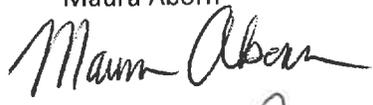
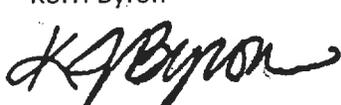
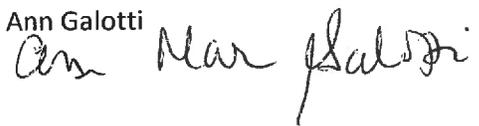
supervision. This will be done on an optional basis for any student wishing to participate in the coursework as we continue to evaluate this pilot class. Only students who choose to participate in these activities will be selected and any training or projects will be clearly communicated to them prior to participation.

We are currently looking at options with the ADL so that the students enrolled in the class will have the opportunity to complete the peer leadership training if they choose to do so. Parents and guardians of participating students will be informed of this opportunity once we have it finalized. The teachers and high school administrators will make arrangements with each student to determine the most successful way to complete the class regardless of their participation in the training.

Upon review, the undersigned have determined that the Peer Leadership Seminar elective course, known to us as the *World of Difference* class (inclusive of the ADL Peer Leadership manual and the *No Place for Hate* manual), is contextually and practically valuable to our students at HHS. This elective class gives our students the chance to work directly with their peers in a leadership capacity, where they can promote not only the HHS Mission Statement, Core Values and Beliefs and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Expectations of Hanover High School, but also the Hanover Public Schools commitment to inclusivity, civility, and equity.

Respectfully,

*Hanover High School Faculty Council*

Maura Aborn 	Korri Byron 	Ann Coates 
Laura Collins 	Shayle Emerson 	Ann Galotti 
Matthew Harden 		

*Hanover High School Administration*

Matthew Mattos 	Kelly Stukenborg 	Susan Egan 
Matthew Plummer 		

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