

**HOLLIS SCHOOL BOARD  
SEPTEMBER 30, 2020  
MEETING MINUTES**

A regular meeting of the Hollis School Board was conducted on Wednesday, September 30, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. at the Hollis Upper Elementary School.

Robert Mann, Chairman, presided:

Members of the Board Present:      Tammy Fareed, Vice Chairman  
   Brooke Arthur, Secretary  
   Amy Kellner  
   Carryl Roy

Members of the Board Absent:

Also Participating:                      Andrew Corey, Superintendent  
   Gina Bergskaug, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction  
   Bob Thompson, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services

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**AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS**

Superintendent Corey stated the discussion item of the SAU rent/long-term lease to be related to the facilities bond, and whether the Board wishes to further those discussions as part of the budget process.

**CORRESPONDENCE/RESIGNATIONS/NOMINATIONS**

Read into the record was the updated language received from the community members working on the Resolution on the non-discrimination and equity initiative:

*“WHEREAS the District is committed to non-discrimination;*

*WHEREAS Hollis Brookline is an inclusive community;*

*WHEREAS the District recognizes that issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion affect all members of the Hollis-Brookline community regardless of their background;*

*WHEREAS many institutions of learning within the State of New Hampshire have developed policies regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion;*

*WHEREAS the current COVID-19 pandemic may bring unique challenges related to that are yet to be examined;*

*THEREFORE, may it be resolved that*

- 1. The SAU #41 school districts will make diversity, equity, and inclusion a strategic priority by actively supporting such efforts.*

- 2. *SAU #41 will review its policies and procedures relative to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and release a plan to address its findings. These actions may include professional development, drafting new or editing existing policies, programs, and procedures, curriculum review, etc.”*

Member Roy noted the language provided is an edited version of what was presented at the July meeting.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Hollis School Board . . . . . [September 1, 2020](#)

*The following amendments were offered:*

Page 2, Line 37; delete the “e” at the end of the line

Page 3, Line 22; replace “for” with “of”

Page 7, Line 46; replace “arises” with “arise”

**MOTION BY MEMBER ARTHUR TO ACCEPT, AS AMENDED  
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER FAREED  
MOTION CARRIED  
5-0-0**

**PUBLIC INPUT**

Jason Naso, 244 Worcester Road

Spoke of the notification received over the summer requesting families identify a choice between in-person and remote. At the time, it was explained that classroom learning was effectively the remote learning, but sitting in the school (no other aspect to it), and that there would be the flexibility to change. One of his children chose in-person and the other remote. A few days prior to the start of the school year, the child who had chosen remote, had a change of heart and wished to attend in-person. They contacted the school, and was informed it was not possible to change enrollment status, and that they could be on a wait list.

They had also believed, should their comfort level for in-person change, they would be able to move their other child from in-person to remote. He questioned the status of that situation believing there might be a cross-over date (October 9<sup>th</sup>).

Chairman Mann stated his understanding the Administration has asked parents to stick with their original decision until October 9th.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated parents were asked to make a choice, which had to be done in order to make class rosters and identify staffing needs. Parents were asked to stick to the October 9<sup>th</sup> date for any requested changes. October 9<sup>th</sup> is a planned remote learning day. At that point, school will have been in session for a month and the Administration will be able to determine whether there is capacity to add more students to the physical environment or if an entire cohort of a grade that was remote could move to in-person. There needed to be a checkpoint where they could identify resources that we have or need before honoring requests to shift between in-person and remote as it could require additional staffing or space that we may or may not have. Some classrooms are being occupied by other items that had to be removed from the classroom to create the social distancing between desks.

The Principals have been asked to maintain waiting lists for those requests so they can be identified on a classroom-by-classroom basis. Some classrooms have room for more students to return to in-person and some do not. Availability can be evaluated on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

Asked if an announcement would be made on October 9<sup>th</sup>, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated October 9<sup>th</sup> is a fully remote learning day, and students will not be in the building. That is the opportunity for the Principals to sit down and evaluate all of their in classroom assignments and physical space, and be able to decide, per grade level/per classroom, if any shifts can be made. Her expectation is that by the end of the day or worst-case scenario, by the morning of the 13<sup>th</sup> those on the waiting lists will be notified. The hope is that the switch would be made for the 13<sup>th</sup>.

Tiffany Testa, 101 Mooar Hill Road, Hollis

Stated her support of a more progressive timeline for the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) work of our community. Her mother was adopted. Both of her parents are from Brooklyn, and grew up in a diverse community. Her grandmother divorced and married a black man providing her with a black aunt and cousins. She would visit them in a black community in Baltimore. She grew up in New Jersey and Florida and that was her life. She moved to northern New Hampshire where there was 1 black resident in her town. He was called the N word by everyone, which she hadn't understood.

She got involved in this school while considering whether she would continue on to become a Marine Biologist. Once here, she witnessed some of the amazing science that was happening here. She found it to be unbelievable what some of the teachers were doing in the school she was substituting in. She connected with the kids. All of her educational foundation has been on a philosophy of building relationships with kids. She became an educator and has been an educator for 25 years. She started off at Souhegan High School, which takes an alternative look at education that puts relationships first. That is what she was engrained in. She moved over to Thayer Academy, another school that emphasized that. She then moved on to Merrimack High School, and that is where it hit her that not all public schools necessarily put those priorities there. In her time in education she has really considered what it is that is important for the students in building relationships.

With the re-opening she encouraged a look at SEL and DEI, but, as a community, we were addressing issues of masks and the like. A resolution was brought forward by community members that highlighted the need to focus on these issues. She now works at a school where we give voice to the students and opportunities to have conversations. It is important work. We want to do it, try to do it, and have done it in some ways, but we need to look at how we can do it more.

Her sons live here. She wants them to grow to be critical thinkers, to use their voice and use it well, and to have opportunities in their school where they can do that. She asked the Board to put the other stuff aside. At each of the district school board meetings she has seen people come forward to speak and try to politicize this. She wants this Board to stand up for education and the students. The resolution that has been presented simply states that we recognize this is what education is about, let's do a self-assessment, and see how we can do it better.

Maria Ramas, 9 Colburn Lane

Stated her support of the spirit of the proposed resolution. However, wished to bring a different aspect as it relates to the necessity to address equity within our current time as we respond, as a District, to the pandemic. Research has demonstrated the achievement and educational gaps within the United States are starkly going to worsen, and we are uncertain, as an educational community and body of researchers, whether or not that achievement gap will ever be able to narrow again.

She was recently on a panel discussion with Richard Rothstein, Author of *The Color of Law*. He discussed the policies and practices that lead to the suburbanization in America, but more importantly how it connected between the monetary and economic advantages given to suburban Americans. It also discusses the segregation that evolved as a result of these practices, policies, and procedures.

Why this is important for us in Hollis is because now we are seeing, as a result of COVID, that we have unprecedented challenges as a district and schools to be able to provide the optimization of experience from an educational standpoint for all students regardless of how they are receiving their education.

She wished to make clear that although our district and the conversations that have come about thus far have been solely around race and equity, we need to understand that equity spans much further than race, racism, sexism, it also discusses how are we going to equitably provide an optimal and excellent experience for all students regardless of what environment they are in. This is important now as a school district. Because of COVID, we now have to think of how we are going to provide an optimal experience of excellence for our students that is not going to minimize and pull back their possibility for achievement as future leaders.

We all know, and she is proud to admit, that she is a resident of Hollis because of the demonstrated history of excellence, within the State and nationally, for students. In order to continue that work, it is absolutely imperative that we take this opportunity of making concepts of diversity, equity, and inclusion a priority for our district. We are now seeing the effects of not having the opportunities in the spring, but we don't know what those affects will be long term.

She spoke of articles that discuss what the pandemic has done from an educational standpoint for students in America, particularly in demographics that we live in here. One in particular by McKinsey & Company, which is an economics firm, discusses how COVID-19 and student learning in the United States will cause a hurt that will potentially last a lifetime.

She requested the Board focus in on what is important; trying to figure out what is best for our students.

She read aloud the language of the amended resolution, noting this work has already begun through the leadership of the Superintendent. Hopefully, as time goes on and as members of the Board change, those priorities will continue to stay in legacy.

## **PRINCIPALS' REPORT**

- Opening of School Update, Enrollment Update, Staffing (remote and in person)

Superintendent Corey noted the extensive report provided with the [agenda](#). He spoke of reducing the number of Administrators present at meetings.

He thanked the Administration for the work done to ensure a successful opening, and spoke of the balance between academics and SEL. He commented on how well the procedures that have been put in place are working, and commended the custodial staff and the new Facilities Manager who have done an outstanding job ensuring consistent practices are being followed.

Superintendent Corey spoke of the Brookline student who tested positive for COVID-19, and of what was learned from the activities that followed. Notification was received on the day of the Open House when Zoom sessions were occurring with parents. The ability to talk to those parents who would be directly impacted took the anxiety level down. That has now become part of the practice. When the first case in Hollis was known, Principal Izbicki invited all of those parents to a Zoom session to hear first-hand about what was going on, the precautions, and steps being taken.

The Principals are working with families who want to either return to in-person or transition to remote learning. They will be providing recommendations to the SAU. Decisions are based around space and staffing. It is hopeful all requests will be able to be honored, however, that is simply uncertain.

Lunch procedures have been going very well. All lunches are packaged and delivered to the classrooms. It is an amazing group of individuals who are doing this work. At the same time they are ensuring that happens in the schools, there remain two stops (RMMS and HBMS) for any remote learning family looking to receive lunches.

With regard to special education, he commended Assistant Superintendent Thompson noting the early October date by which the District needs to have had all evaluation meetings to discuss what occurred educationally and how students are doing in regard to goals and objectives. Under his leadership, those meetings have gone very well.

The District provided flu shots, and the vast majority of teachers participated. It is hoped there will be additional guidance as we head into the flu season. The symptoms do mirror each other, and the SAU will be very conservative. The SAU has relied heavily on the strength of its nursing staff. The SAU has 8 nurses where many districts have 1-2. It is an area the community has always supported, and one that is paying great dividends. There is a floating nurse, and on the days where a case is encountered that nurse is automatically reassigned to that building to help alleviate the load. As she has been at both buildings when it has occurred, she is able to assist our nurses who may have not been through the protocols with the DHHS. It takes time as it could be hours from the time of initial contact before the discussion takes place. The SAU follows its protocols and moves forward. One of the issues encountered in the neighboring district is the 15-minute test that is now available in Nashua and Bedford. That test means that the school district receives information on the results before the DHHS does. The upload to them is usually about 24 hours later.

He commended parents noting their diligence with the Daily Symptom Monitoring. Parents have allowed our buses to run because of the volume of car pooling that is occurring.

Member Arthur stated concern for families where their current situation might not be working for them, and are not aware of the need to request to be placed on a waiting list. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated part of the confusion in communication was due to the many moving parts, e.g., the Administration was working with teachers and support staff to come to agreements, and a clear answer could not be understood until all of the pieces were in place.

In terms of the number of individuals on a wait list, there are 4 or 5 per building. Some have come to be on the list as a result of families contacting the SAU and others as a result of the Administration following up in instances where either in-person or remote students are not participating. The District reaches out to the families to understand if there is a reason for truancy. Sometimes it comes up that there are technical difficulties, the schedule is difficult to maintain, etc. The District is working with those families to determine how to improve the situation. There is concern not all of the requests will be able to be honored if many more are received.

Chairman Mann commented on the importance for parents to understand that October 9<sup>th</sup> is the deadline where a decision will be made. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug responded it has been in some of the newsletters. It has been identified as a check-in date to see how things are going and if a change needs to be made. Asked if this is the only check-in date, she stated there is not another one planned, but she would imagine another look would be done at the next natural break, which would be right before the Thanksgiving holiday. The Monday before Thanksgiving is a fully remote learning day as well.

Member Roy stated the need to provide direction for the October 9<sup>th</sup> deadline. The checkpoint concept was discussed a great deal during the re-opening discussions over the summer. We should let everyone having a desire to make a change to put their hat in the ring. If it is learned that an entire class worth of students who are currently remote wish to move to in-person, and that works with staffing, then that can be honored. She would rather know where people are at than have anyone wondering why they were not aware of the opportunity to request that. It should be made very clear that all requests may not be able to be honored because of staffing and spacing parameters.

Chairman Mann requested the Board receive an update on the decisions made with regard to the October 9<sup>th</sup> deadline, at its November meeting. Member Roy suggested, prior to the October 9<sup>th</sup> deadline, that all parents be asked if they wish to continue with the current enrollment status or have a desire to change. The Board can be updated on the requests that were able to be accommodated, and can then determine if there is the need to identify another checkpoint.

Member Kellner spoke of the need to remind individuals of the 14-day quarantine following any travel outside of New England. She stated concern with the long Columbus Day weekend and the weeks following Thanksgiving and Christmas. If we have a lot of people traveling it could really impact the number of remote sections.

Vice Chairman Fareed stated her understanding October 9<sup>th</sup> was discussed as the first check-in point because of the remote learning day scheduled. She is curious if the District has to maintain an all or nothing calendar going forth after that. She spoke of the difficulties that could be faced if having to move to remote learning for 14 days after travel and then facing another holiday and potential travel shortly thereafter.

Superintendent Corey remarked he does not believe the idea of moving to remote because you chose to travel and now have to quarantine will work. The District cannot overload remote teachers and probably won't be able to shift someone from in-person to remote. We simply won't have the staffing to potentially meet those needs. Chairman Mann stressed the communication sent to parents should notice if traveling, there is no expectation that you can simply shift to remote learning for the required 14-day quarantine.

Vice Chairman Fareed remarked we have to supply an education to all children of taxpayers. No student can be told we cannot educate you because you went out of town and we don't have the remote learning teachers. It would scramble the system, but we still have to supply the best we possibly can.

She asked if there would be a requirement to wait until the next natural check-in point if wishing to transition from in person to remote after the October 9<sup>th</sup> deadline. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug noted some of the things learned through work with DHHS, given our cases, is that we really need to pay attention to our 48-hour look back. If we were to start willy nilly making switches it really complicates our very tight process. We have been commended by DHHS on the protocols we have in place and our ability to stick with them and provide information at a quick rate. This is all about the health and safety of our students and staff. It is a balancing act between trying to provide the wants but absolutely providing the musts.

Chairman Mann remarked that is an important point for having people understand why there are check-in points; there is an operational aspect to reporting and being able to use the data to pivot, if we really have to, to completely remote.

Vice Chairman Fareed remarked if we had 100% of students want to remote learn we can't just say we don't have the teachers for that within our ed specs. We have to provide it. We are legally required to provide an education to every student in this Town. What we can't provide is floor space. When hearing we may not have the staffing she understands the pragmatics of that are very tight, but it is not that we can't find some way to get staff to teach students it is that the flexibility is physical.

Superintendent Corey responded right now you can't find staff. Vice Chairman Fareed responded you would have to change the number of students per staff member. We would have to provide an education. Superintendent Corey stated it could be done, but the Board may have to decide that the two weeks after Christmas is 100% remote and quarantine everybody for those two weeks. Some people will view that two weeks as an opportunity to go back to wherever they just came from.

Member Arthur asked for clarification if an individual is required to quarantine because of COVID, you are then eligible for the remote section; you stay with your teacher and you attend the remote section. Is travel not considered required quarantine because of COVID?

Member Roy stated DHHS guidelines are, if a student has traveled outside of New England, they have to quarantine for 14 days. We did say in that case they could appear in the learning Zoom portions of the remote classes. It is not going back and forth, but we did say that is part of it. She is uncertain how she would feel should 45 people decide if that is an option they wish to travel. Member Arthur remarked that is how it is currently written.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug clarified any request for remote instruction for a child who has been exposed to COVID, has had to quarantine for 14 days, and is still able to participate in instruction, will go through the building administrator. Although yes the agreement was the students would be in the Zoom of the remote teacher, stay rostered with the in-person teacher, and there would be set up three 20-minute sessions of one-on-one with their classroom teacher, we can't all of a sudden have 90 students decide to participate this way. If we are trying to set up for 14 students 3 times a week at 20 minutes sessions and you have a Zoom of 90 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students, that is just not going to work. We would have to make some tough decisions about what would be approved. Those in-person teachers would still have a commitment to those few kids who did not travel.

Vice Chairman Fareed questioned if 90 students travel and come back and have to quarantine by law, we can't not provide them an education. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug responded we could provide them with Google Classroom for example. It is never as black and white as we would like it to be. If 100% of students went remote we would be able to provide that instruction, but it is when 2/3 of the class goes remote and there remains a duty for the 1/3 that is in person, they cannot be rearranged because there are seating charts that have to be sent to DHHS, etc. All of a sudden the burden would be on the remote teacher.

In trying to satisfy everybody's level of comfort, desire, need for health reasons, is quite the puzzle, and the Administration has to take it day by day, case by case. From the very beginning she has stated continuously a conversation with the Administrator would have to take place in order to change the enrollment.

Vice Chairman Fareed commented the points made this evening make it clear we cannot offer utter flexibility, under any circumstance. Very tough choices have to be made.

The Administration will communicate the October 9<sup>th</sup> deadline via Principal newsletters, and will advise families about the travel restriction. The Board will continue the discussion at the November meeting, at which point additional information will be known. It is unknown where the country will go during this time. It may be that we see a tightening or loosening of travel restrictions. At any point, the easiest solution, not a popular one, is to go 100% remote. We may discuss that just because we enter flu season. It might be the safest way to deal with educating students, period. The problem is trying to identify when flu season is. His colleague in ConVal is doing the whole month of December remotely and coming back after the new year. Traditionally during his time in the District, our worst flu outbreak and sickness is in February. In a typical year, we struggle to make it to February break with the number of students getting sick. There will be discussion at the November meeting around what the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester will look like. An additional check-in period in February could be discussed. Superintendent Corey remarked he wouldn't recommend the week before February vacation. With Massachusetts being on vacation that week, there is the potential that would lead to more transferring. However, during the first week in March, there is no school district that has an official vacation. For us it wouldn't be a vacation, it would just be 100% remote.

What you are hearing from the Administration is they are happy to look at check-in periods, but are uncertain what the reality is. In some districts, educating children is putting papers in bags. We have chosen to do either in-person or remote, and those are the two options we would like to stay with as much as we can.

Chairman Mann remarked, let's ensure, as part of that notification, we are making no guarantees that we can accommodate everyone. He suggested the agenda for the November meeting include a discussion around an additional check-in date, and an update on the outcome of the October 9<sup>th</sup> check-in.

Member Roy remarked as part of the conversations had over the summer during discussion of the re-opening and following DHHS guidelines, she heard a lot of commentary that they don't necessarily go as far as they could have. Although we have to follow those, she suggested it would not be inappropriate for the Board to decide the District would expand on those and add clarification. She specifically noted language around siblings of quarantined individuals. She is aware there is a situation at HPS presently with an entire class quarantined. There are students in that class who have siblings in other classes, and there is concern about the exposure point if the siblings continue to attend school in person. She questioned why the District would not allow a parent of a quarantined student to say they are not comfortable to send the siblings to school, and if the sibling would be permitted to transfer to remote.

Assistant Superintendent Thompson stated one of the terms DHHS has started using is the idea of close contact versus exposure. We do not have evidence to suggest that our students were exposed. There may have been close contact. Their quarantine is really a precautionary measure. Had there been true exposure, the recommendation from DHHS may have been different. It is a recommendation of DHHS if you come into contact with someone who has been exposed. Part of the rationale for allowing the siblings to return is that was the recommendation of DHHS because the quarantine is really precautionary.



Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug added families have asked about the sibling, and the Administration has stated they were not asked to quarantine, however, if you feel more comfortable you can, as a family, make that decision.

Member Roy questioned if the students could then remotely learn, and was informed the District has allowed them to remotely learn if they made that choice. Member Arthur commented it is easier at the middle and high schools because they room and Zoom.

Vice Chairman Fareed asked for clarification a sibling can learn remotely even within our own district. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug responded there might be a tipping point, but in our two cases, we had conversations with any families who asked the question, and said we are not asking you to quarantine the siblings, however, if you, as a family, feel safer doing so, we will honor your request for that quarantine and they will have access to remote learning.

Member Roy stated she was pleased to hear that from the Administration and to hear that DHHS mentions siblings because that was not part of the DHHS language section added to the re-opening plan. Assistant Superintendent Thompson stated the only difference would be if you were someone who was in close contact and you had symptoms. Then your sibling would need to quarantine. We have not been provided with information that that is the case.

Superintendent Corey commented on the nurse being the contact person. When the nurse is notified, the first thing done is a look in PowerSchool to check for siblings. They then contact the nurses at the other buildings so that everyone is aware. Then it is just a matter of everyone waiting to receive the information that we get back from DHHS.

## **DISCUSSION**

- FY22 Budget Overview

The Board was provided with a handout (SAU Graph 3B (copy attached)). The SAU 41 Budget Sub-Committee represents the communities of Hollis and Brookline, their budget committees, and their school boards. Members work with the SAU staff to craft the budget. One area of the SAU budget that is also discussed within the Hollis School District budget is the Guaranteed Maximum Rate (GMR) of increase for insurance, which is being set at 10.9%. It typically ranges from a low of about 3% across the State to a high of just under 20%.

Coming up in FY22 will be the bi-annual rate change for the New Hampshire Retirement System. The employee group (non-teachers) will go from 11.17% to 14.08% (an increase in health insurance cost of \$18,826 and in dental \$1,850). At the SAU level, the Business Administrator falls in the teacher category. As an example of the impact, in the SAU budget, the 16 employees at the SAU will result in an increase of \$55,262.

Superintendent Corey spoke of the grant the Town of Hollis applied for to fund a portion of a Community Resource Officer. The Town will put out a Warrant Article having been notified they will receive funding if approved by the Town.

The current School Resource Officer (SRO) is allocated 80% at the COOP and 20% in Hollis. That 20% will go away, but there will be a new cost coming in to the Hollis budget to represent the Community Resource Officer. Presently looking at about a 60/40 split.

There are no new staffing requests. Two rounds of the budget have been done, and the draft budget will be presented to the Board at its November meeting.

The SAU budget is allocated into the three district budgets (apportioned). The SAU budget will be before the SAU 41 Governing Board at its October 15<sup>th</sup> meeting, and is voted on in December.

At the time of the last meeting, the increase over the FY21 budget was 10.9% (prior to GMR information being received). They have looked at adjustments to salaries and other items that can be controlled as a means of reducing the percentage of anticipated increase.

Chairman Mann stated the current draft budget represents an increase of 7.2% over the FY21 budget (approx. 6% is associated with benefits).

- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Update

Superintendent Corey thanked Ms. Testa and Ms. Ramas as they have both volunteered to serve on the Superintendent's Advisory Committee (Committee). The Committee will assist the Superintendent in going through topics, gathering and reviewing research, and making recommendations to the Board. Committee membership consists of Kylie Rasku (parent of high school student), Dr. Marie Ramas (parent of students in multiple schools), Andrew Scott (parent of current and former students), Gerrell Smith (member of HB Elevates and parent of students in the district), David Werner (community member), Tiffany Testa, Caitie Conant, and Diane Marsolini. The primary role of the committee is to discuss the strategic opportunities and objectives for DEI for all students. The Committee will regularly update the Board, and, at times, ask for support on certain topics.

The Committee's role is to begin the process of discussing our strategic objectives to DEI for all students.

Superintendent Corey spoke of having done a great deal of reading in the past month. Understanding there will come a time when the knowledge gained will have to be explained to children (and that those children range in age from 3 to 12<sup>th</sup> grade), he came across an analogy provided by Dr. Robert Sellers, University of Michigan. Dr. Sellers compares DEI to a dance. He was uncertain how he felt about that comparison. While walking down the hallway at HPS recently he overheard the P.E. Teacher playing the tambourine and instructing students to shake their arms, shake their legs, etc. He was getting upset knowing we are not supposed to be having P.E. in the gym. When he walked into the gym he witnessed the P.E. teacher doing remote P.E. He was the only one in the gym. He approached him and peeked over his shoulder to see that he was working with some of our youngest learners. It dawned on him that all children get the word dance. We teach them dance and movement. Dr. Sellers says diversity is that everyone is invited to the party, equity is that everyone contributes to the play list, and inclusion is that everyone has the opportunity to dance.

The two programs that will be reviewed at the onset are already in use within the SAU; Collaborative for Academic Social Emotional Learning (CASEL) Program and the Choose Love Program. Our teachers are familiar with both of these programs, which have expanded to include DEI. The Committee will look to see how we can build off of these programs that are already in place.

At the 7-12 grade level, work is being done on what is termed "Portrait of a Cavalier". That work is based on identifying the skillset we want our graduates to have. One of the concepts being discussed is courageous conversations. A courageous conversation is any conversation where participants can commit to engage each other with honesty, open mindedness, to listen deeply to better understand each other's perspectives, and sustain the conversation if it gets uncomfortable or sidetracked. If we can send our graduates off to college or the work environment willing to have these courageous conversations about any topic, then we have prepared them well.

The Committee's purpose (not yet vetted by the Committee) is to represent the diverse perspectives of students and communities that make up SAU 41. They will create a DEI statement for Board review. They will take the work done on the resolution and look at it in terms of SAU 41; how do we want that phrased/what we want it to look like, and bring that back to the Board, at some point, for adoption.

They want to make the approved statement an objective or goal in the Strategic Plan. This cannot be about the current Administration or Board. As part of the Strategic Plan, it would be broadly advertised to the community as a statement of what we believe in. That could be changed by future Administration/boards, but a change would require open discussion.

The Committee would serve as a future resource for the SAU to ensure future alignment and would inform the communities and staff via public forums, the Strategic Plan, professional development, etc. of the evolving role of the group and next steps. One of the initial activities the Committee will likely take on is the creation of a baseline understanding of what DEI means for SAU 41. It should be based on the values of our families. Information sessions will be conducted to gather input from the community-at-large.

The Committee will identify DEI measures already in place; what we have for existing programming and lessons. Principals will be asked to look at what we currently do from K-12 to address these topics. That will allow for identifying if there are grades where there is nothing or limited programming, and how we can put something in so that it becomes part of our standard curriculum, but is integrated into what we already want to teach. We are not looking to bring in something new, but rather incorporate additional items.

With so much going on with teachers, particularly at this time, part of this is to give them the framework they need, then provide the professional development while balancing that with this once in a lifetime (hopefully) virus.

We have a remarkable group of individuals who have volunteered. Although not all will be members of the advisory committee, some will help with public forums, data gathering, etc. Some have expertise (teaching credentials) and are willing to provide guidance around curriculum pieces that will likely be encountered. Individuals who have reached out to him are passionate and excited about this work, and are looking forward to the process starting.

Chairman Mann remarked he believes this to be a nice advancement of the resolution, and something the Board can move forward with. The other aspect of the Committee is the larger body of work around the Strategic Plan and how we build actionable items into the Plan. Without that, this doesn't have a lot of meaning beyond nice thoughts on a piece of paper. Understanding that the draft resolution will be the first priority and serve as the compass for the lengthier project of building in the items for the Strategic Plan, he questioned the timeline anticipated for draft language to be brought before the Board.

Superintendent Corey stated his believe it is just a matter of letting the Committee hash that out as in some ways that can help provide direction. At the meeting scheduled for next week, the Committee will begin its work in that regard. The Committee will determine how it wishes to approach that; may decide to start to break into sub-groups.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug remarked work on a “Portrait of a Cavalier” began just prior to the Pandemic. Meetings were conducted prior to and during the quarantine. They progressed well, and have final drafts. They have not met in some time as there was something missing; there was a feeling it didn’t really represent the graduate/Cavalier we want. The idea was to have this “Portrait of a Cavalier” and then look at the Strategic Plan to determine whether those goals get us to the identified point, and, if not, to identify what is missing. She believes it to be the perfect time to add to it, whether that be courageous conversations or other items as additional pillars. It seems to be perfect timing to slide into this and then do that critical analysis of the Strategic Plan.

Member Arthur stated the desire for the Board to own the initiative. She wants the Board to act, and would like to see the Committee do additional work. She noted two of the members appointed to the Committee have spoken out against the resolution. She wanted it to be clear that there are people on the Committee that are publicly against the DEI work.

Chairman Mann clarified input provided at previous meetings was based on draft language presented in June. The document presented this evening is quite different.

Member Arthur requested the Superintendent address the decisions around Committee membership; whether based on public opinions or credentials for the work.

Superintendent Corey responded, in many cases, the individual expressed an interest and passion. He did not consider which side of the issue they spoke to. Committee membership also includes two individuals who assisted with the sponsorship of the resolution. The desire is for the Committee to represent both communities and all viewpoints. The meetings may not be easy as there is some work to be done, but he does believe the product that results will be very beneficial for the communities and ultimately the students.

Member Arthur requested he clarify both communities and all viewpoints. Superintendent Corey stated the two communities are Hollis and Brookline (have relatively equal membership) and the viewpoints were those concerned with the language in the first draft, those who support the concept of DEI, and those who thought the wording of the first draft was maybe palatable. There has yet to be a committee discussion, and we’re in some ways making assumptions about what direction people will take. He reiterated his belief this committee will ultimately arrive at something the Board can support and something that will assist us with our communities as we move forward to support our students.

Member Arthur questioned if the consultant that the Superintendent spoke with provided a quote. Superintendent Corey stated his belief that had been shared; however, stated it to be in the area of \$20,000 for the initial work and \$140,000 for the year. Asked if a written quote were available that could be shared with the Board, he stated he would be happy to share that information.

Asked for clarification of the action desired by the Board, Member Arthur stated her desire for the Board to take on the responsibility of putting the language to and adopting the resolution without the assistance of the Committee. The Committee could then use the resolution to get further along in the work of DEI.

Member Roy questioned the consequence of adopting a resolution. Chairman Mann stated a resolution is not policy. It is a public statement that says these are our beliefs and those beliefs could translate into policy or strategic work, etc. It is more of a public statement establishing where we stand as it relates to DEI. He has suggested previously, and received a recommendation from legal counsel at the New Hampshire School Board Association, that it be treated like a policy in the sense of putting it through multiple readings allowing opportunities for public input. When reaching the point where the Board feels comfortable in doing so, it can adopt the language.

There is very little that would block that process other than does its short circuit some of the work the Committee might be doing. Regardless, the Board can deem it wants a resolution sooner rather than later. The Board could also make amendments after adoption. At the end of the day, the resolution, when adopted, is that of the Board.

Vice Chairman Fareed noted there is law surrounding the board passing a policy (requirements for readings, how it plays out through contractual obligations with staff, etc.). There is no legal language, that she is aware of, that is binding with respect to a resolution.

Member Arthur stated her impression, were the Board to adopt a resolution, that action would communicate to the Hollis community and Administration that this Board is prioritizing this work.

Superintendent Corey stated concern were one board to adopt language and the other two school boards did not agree with the language, the goal would not be achieved. Were this Board to choose to wordsmith the resolution, he would recommend members of the Brookline and COOP School Boards be involved in that process. Otherwise, the SAU could end up with 3 different statements, which would be a concern.

Member Arthur stated that is why the resolution was originally brought before the SAU 41 Governing Board. They were informed that was not the appropriate forum.

Vice Chairman Fareed spoke of having enormous concerns with the five members of the Board deciding on the language without input from parties who would have a more direct and authentic experience and input. She stated concern with the fact that there are no school board members sitting on the Committee, and that she would vote against anything that doesn't have some board member from at least one of the districts participating to hear first-hand, authentic voices, authentically speaking to the issues.

She does not see how the five members of this Board could be talking about equity and think they know best what should be in this resolution. This makes a mockery of the whole purpose of this, which is to get authentic input from stakeholders who are subject to the very problems we are trying to solve. We would be deciding what they need the language to be without actually having their input into it, and deciding that we know best, which she finds appalling. We're deciding that the Superintendent gets to represent the work of the Committee to the Board without the Board hearing from those authentic voices. This is the most important thing we do; serve human beings.

She does not see how anyone can insist that we sign on something that has not had input from authentic effected individuals in our community. Member Roy stated her belief the language was written by the very people being referred to. Vice Chairman Fareed remarked it has not been through a process that authenticates it. Member Roy noted it was brought forth by a community group made up of several people mentioned and listed on the Committee that is looking at it.

Vice Chairman Fareed stated her understanding, the Hollis School District is a municipal agency and not a community group. The District has legal obligations that supersede any good language. The process is critical to making something that is actionable, that is armored against incursions from those who would want to undermine it to harm it. She does not see how we could sit here and adopt this without significant process that authenticates it in the most legal possible fashion.

She proposed that the Board allow the process to continue as proposed. Members Roy and Arthur questioned what the process is. Vice Chairman Fareed responded there is a whole community process that has been discussed. She reiterated she cannot understand how the Committee cannot have a single Board member on it. Member Roy questioned if what was being requested of the Superintendent was that a member from each of the

3 school district boards sit on the Committee. Vice Chairman Fareed stated she was asking the Chairman of the Hollis School Board to impose a conversation on the topic.

Superintendent Corey reminded the Board if forming a school board committee, it would be necessary to adhere to all requirements of RSA 91-A, e.g., timeline for notification of meetings, posting of meeting notices, taking of minutes, etc. The goal was to try to utilize the work of the Committee to bring a resolution back to the Board. He assured the Board he does not need to be the one to speak to the resolution; the Committee membership is more than willing to take that on. If the Board wishes to hear from them, he would be happy to accommodate that.

Tiffany Testa, 101 Mooar Hill Road, Hollis

Spoke out from the audience asking if the Board had any questions of her as a member of the Committee.

Vice Chairman Fareed commented she was not interested in her opinion because it is not a matter of opinions, it is a matter of formal legal process that holds the community to the obligations that come out of the work.

Ms. Testa stated she understands what a resolution is, sits on a board herself, and has given a resolution with her board. A resolution is just a statement from the board.

Vice Chairman Fareed remarked it does not have to be a committee of the board to have Board members participate on it. Superintendent Corey noted the request for the Chairman to make that decision. Vice Chairman Fareed stated the Hollis School District is owned and operated by the School Board. If there is going to be a discussion on any topic, it is through the Chair not the Administration, which is why she was addressing her request to the Chairman. If we are talking about adopting language for any purpose, whether it is to telegraph the intent of these five people or to write policy and make it something that is irrespective of who is sitting in these seats, she wants it to be a rock that cannot be moved.

Chairman Mann reiterated resolutions are not binding. Policies are like a law that we write and follow. We can waive policies when we have to under certain circumstances, and following a public discussion as to why such an action would be taken. A resolution is a statement, that is it. He spoke of being sympathetic to the remarks concerning the need to follow a process. We need to allow some of the work of the Committee to happen. He questioned the will of the Board relative to requesting the Committee focus first on their meeting schedule and share that with the public so that Board and other community members can attend and witness the work being done.

Vice Chairman Fareed stated the Committee is not a committee of the Hollis School Board but an advisory committee to the Superintendent. She does not see how that has any obligations for public posting, etc. She wants someone who represents the obligations of a school board to hear the discussion. It has nothing to do with trusting or not trusting members of the Administration. The Board is sitting here listening to whoever decides to speak. Some people decided not to. She does not know what their opinions are. She does not feel like this topic can be handled this way. It feels loose and susceptible to intervention by people who would like to handicap it. She spoke of having been involved in the Board long enough to have seen how, when things are not handled in a procedurally sound fashion, you can have the whole thing undermined by astute individuals who use process against the intended purpose. This is too important to have it undermined.

Member Roy questioned if what was being asked was that the Superintendent make this an actual school board directed committee so that the work can result in policy, etc. If a resolution there are no laws that require a process to be followed.

Vice Chairman Fareed stated that to not be her intent. Asked for clarification, she stated she wants a process to be followed and a board member included on the Committee. Asked if she were volunteering to sit on the Committee, she responded she would do anything the board needs, but she does not need to be the person. She feels that the Board needs a representative on this Committee if the Board is to do what is being asked of it.

Member Arthur requested a sense of the Board. She stated agreement with having a Board member on the Committee, but was unclear if the Board could take that action.

Member Roy questioned the implications of directing that there has to be a board member on the Committee. Chairman Mann stated the Board did not form and formally charge a committee to do the work. This is something very different; an initiative from the office of the Superintendent convening an advisory committee to gather information. A request could be made for a board member to sit on the Committee. He was uncertain if legal advice was necessary.

Member Arthur stated the Board could start by making such a request. Member Roy questioned the purpose of a Board member sitting on the Committee if the Committee is doing the work and bringing the product back to the Board.

Superintendent Corey stated the Committee to be advisory in nature. The work product would be brought back to the Board, and the Board could choose whether to adopt. Another board may choose not to. From his viewpoint, it is more of a look at the students from age 3 to graduation. He does not look at curriculum from the standpoint of a particular district, but from the standpoint of what will make the student as competitive as they can be socially, emotionally, and academically. If the desire of the Board is to have a member sit on the Committee, he will look to identify someone willing to participate in that fashion. He chose a group of people he believes will do exceptional work.

A resolution is relatively easy work from a document point of view, but he would not want it to be nothing more than a document. When arriving in the District, one of the stated goals was moving away from three distinct districts and looking through the lens of a student. That is what they have been doing extensively. The reason it is not appropriate for discussion at the Governing Board level is because that body cannot dictate what either of the three districts do. It does not have that authority. Its authority is to oversee the Superintendent as the only hire of the SAU Board. It is designed to provide an umbrella of services so that it becomes cost effective.

He is not opposed to having a board member on the Committee. His only concern with the Board moving forward with the resolution, at this time, would be that the agenda for this meeting did not identify that the Board would be considering/taking any action. If something the Board wishes to pursue, he suggested the Committee be permitted to begin its work, and place a discussion item on the next meeting agenda to allow for public input.

Chairman Mann questioned the will of the Board relative to making a request for a board member to participate on the Committee.

Member Roy stated her belief requesting a Board member be part of the Committee is necessary. She is pleased with the adjustment made from the time of the initial presentation. She is supportive of the resolution, and does not wish to stand in the way of the work of the Committee. She does wish to hear from the Committee.

She believes in the importance of a resolution. The Administration is already doing a great deal of work towards the Portrait of a Cavalier.

Member Kellner stated her support of the initiative noting she does not have a strong feeling about a board member being on the Committee. She feels as though she has a great deal to learn, and although supportive of

the initiative, does not feel she has a place on the Committee. She trusts the Committee to do their job and bring a draft forward to the Board.

Chairman Mann stated he had an opportunity to speak one-on-one with some, and has had some time to consider those discussions. He would like to understand the meeting schedule of the Committee, and given the opportunity for Board or community members to be able to witness the work and direction of the Committee. He feels it to be a great opportunity for Board members to hear the input of our community members of color. He has enjoyed the input received from community members since this work started in June at the Governing Board meeting. He believes the Committee needs to consider publishing a meeting schedule to allow for that opportunity. He does not feel that he necessarily has to have an appointed school board member on the Committee. When committees get too large their work can become more difficult.

Vice Chairman Fareed noted members of the Committee are not public officials. She does not believe State RSAs require, or if it is even acceptable for a meeting of such a group to be public. RSAs protect private individuals. Asked if there are opportunities for community members to listen and attend the meetings, Superintendent Corey responded, as a Committee, they have not discussed that. He would not want to simply dictate what will occur. The Administration has heard from the Board, and the concerns raised can be discussed. The intent is not to come before the Board with a final product, but rather to provide that explanation on how the language was arrived at. Meetings of the Board are public. Regular updates will be provided to the Board either through a Committee member or him.

Chairman Mann stated a request would not be made that a board member be put on the Committee although some very good input as to why that might be a good direction has been provided. He stated the desire for this item to continue to be placed on agendas for further discussion/updates, would like to hear when meetings are scheduled and be provided the opportunity to listen in.

Member Arthur asked for clarification on the consensus of the Board that the desire is to wait on the resolution to receive input from the Committee as it is believed the resolution needs input from the Committee before acting on it.

Chairman Mann stated there to be nothing on the agenda that would inform the public of the intent to take such an action. Asked if that should be added to the agenda for the November meeting, Chairman Mann stated that could be done. A motion for a first reading could pass or fail at that time as members may feel we have not allowed enough time for the Committee to do substantial enough work to accept language.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug suggested the Board consider indicating the subject matter be placed on the agenda for the November meeting. Prior to publishing an agenda, based on the work of the Committee to that point, the Superintendent will have a better understanding of what type of action could be anticipated and what type of supplemental information might be included in the agenda packet. She suggested the Board would have the agenda packet and members would be able to consider the language and be prepared to provide any recommended amendments at the meeting.

Chairman Mann stated the resolution would be placed on the agenda for the November meeting (under New Business). Superintendent Corey clarified this came to the Board as a communication. It is not in the Board packet because communications are not included as part of the agenda packet. Communications are read at meetings. Next month, if in the packet, the document would be included and would provide that public notice this is the document we are discussing. It is a very technical piece, but board packets are not simply information received from any source. Materials are included after the SAU Administration confers with the Board Chair or the majority of the Board directs something to be included in an agenda packet.



Member Arthur stated her belief that was part of the confusion because the original draft was in the Board packet in July. Superintendent Corey reiterated the SAU Governing Board has no jurisdiction over the item so it was simply a discussion piece whereas posting the material as part of the agenda packet would give the appearance that action would be taken.

Member Arthur stated the desire to see a faculty member on the Committee; perhaps one that has interest in the work, and asked if that has been considered. Superintendent Corey responded from a Committee standpoint, what he talked to Ms. Testa about (as the co-facilitator) is doing a wealth of work with faculty, but not necessarily looking at just one individual because there will be questions and different pieces for faculty. They will be involved in this process. There is the need for the work to be K-12. There will be forums conducted with faculty members, professional development discussions, etc.

Chairman Mann stated a first reading of the resolution would be added to the agenda for the November meeting.

- Annual Meeting Discussion

Superintendent Corey spoke of consideration of moving the Hollis Annual Meeting to the High School to accommodate social distancing. A discussion of the Annual Meeting will be included as part of the agenda for the November meeting.

Chairman Mann commented on being pleased with the idea of setting the date for the Annual Meeting as early as possible, utilizing the largest space available, and the idea of a streamlined warrant.

Member Roy stated the need to have a backup plan in place.

Vice Chairman Fareed questioned if consideration would be given to the density of these meetings as well as the pollution from adults in the buildings for meetings and then students in the buildings during the day. Typically we might have two district meetings in a single week. Superintendent Corey remarked Brookline's gymnasium is almost a regulation gymnasium. He feels a little more comfortable, but at the same time, as we move forward, it will be discussed with the Brookline School Board. He is quite confident with the mechanical devices we have for cleaning. There could be a discussion around a definitive end time, which would assist in accommodating the time needed for the cleaning process to take place. Another option is a Saturday meeting.

- SAU Rent/Long-Term Lease

Superintendent Corey commented as we start to get into budget discussions, he will discuss the SAU facilities bond. The Hollis Budget Committee had requested a long-term lease. At the October SAU Governing Board meeting a discussion will occur around a long-term lease. A ten-year lease would coincide with the life of the bond and ensure tenants in the building.

In November, he would bring forward information around the rental payment for such a lease. His first thoughts are in FY22 there would be no increase as there would not yet be a new facility, and the SAU budget is already maxed. In FY23, if the voters approve the bond, we will know the space is arriving and would project an increase based on the new square footage. From there, the Board, working with the Administration, would once again set rental increases so that all three districts can budget their rental costs. There was talk about the percentage of the rent that would go to offset the cost of the bond, which would need to be a discussion for this Board. Presently revenue received from rental income is placed in the Maintenance Trust, which is used to maintain the facility.

The physical asset will continue to be owned by Hollis, so at the end of the ten years, they will have whatever the rental payment was to reduce the cost of the bond, but will also have the physical asset that they can release for another ten years to the SAU Administration or anything else desired. One other critical component is if we go through this process, the bond is approved, and we approve a lease, we also need to ensure that we do the legal work to separate the SAU field from the building and parking area. That field would become the property of the Hollis School District. If at some point down the road the decision were reached to sell the facility, the field would be retained by the District.

Chairman Mann stated his opinion all of the rationale for doing such a project on that property still stands. The two major takeaways heard last year were the long-term lease and an equitable distribution of the cost for the project. There was a lot of discussion around which districts are contributing what. The square footage charge is really a charge to maintain the property. He now looks at the bond for the project separately. He questioned if a long-term lease agreement could be structured to stipulate the square footage and the period at which that cost would be reviewed based on current conditions. The project could be broken out as a property assessment/bond assessment so we have two components that make up the costs to the District; square footage rental that will persist and the other an assessment of the improvements that breaks out some sort of an equitable model between the districts.

Perhaps that long-term lease agreement would go beyond the life of the bond as the districts are being assessed for the project and will want some additional value after the project is completed.

Superintendent Corey noted two separate attorneys will have to be utilized given the natural conflict of interest; Superintendent occupies both seats. He will recommend Tom Closson to work on the Hollis side and James O'Shaughnessy on the SAU side to eliminate the potential conflict of interest.

### **DELIBERATIONS**

- To see what action the Board will take regarding Policy [BCA](#) – Board Member Code of Ethics

**MOTION BY MEMBER FAREED THAT THE BOARD, BY ROLL CALL, STATE AGREEMENT TO ADHERE TO POLICY BCA – BOARD MEMBER CODE OF ETHICS**  
**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER KELLNER**

*A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:*

Yea: Brooke Arthur, Carryl Roy, Amy Kellner, Tammy Fareed, Robert Mann

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Nay:

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**MOTION CARRIED**

- To see what action the Board will take regarding Policy [DFA](#) – Investment.

The State requires the policy be reviewed on a yearly basis. The intent is to provide an opportunity, at least yearly, to consider investments. In large districts that receive tax dollars in a single transfer, there may be a decision to invest as a means of generating revenue. As identified within the current policy, the School District Treasurer working in conjunction with the Superintendent and his/her designee and pursuant to RSA 197:23-a, is authorized to invest the funds of the District subject to specified objectives and standards of care.

**MOTION BY MEMBER FAREED TO ADOPT POLICY DFA – INVESTMENT  
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER KELLNER**

ON THE QUESTION

Vice Chairman Fareed requested the Superintendent speak to the District’s investments, if any. Superintendent Corey stated the District typically does not have any; however, this provides the Board a policy to utilize should it wish to do so. One current item, which he would not call an investment, is the funding approved for the HSMART bond. That is generating interest at whatever the going rate is as it has to be very fluid as we continue to move through the phases of the project. There are no other funds at this time invested on behalf of the District.

Noted was that the copy of the policy attached to the agenda was that of the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District. The policy for the Hollis School District differs only in reference to the particular board.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**5-0-0**

NON-PUBLIC

**MOTION BY MEMBER KELLNER THAT THE BOARD GO INTO NON-PUBLIC SESSION  
PURSUANT TO RSA 91-A:3 II (a) THE DISMISSAL, PROMOTION OR COMPENSATION OF ANY  
PUBLIC EMPLOYEE AND (c) TO DISCUSS A MATTER, WHICH IF DISCUSSED IN PUBLIC,  
WOULD LIKELY AFFECT ADVERSELY THE REPUTATION OF A PERSON, OTHER THAN A  
MEMBER OF THE BODY OR AGENCY ITSELF**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER FAREED**

*A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:*

Yea: Brooke Arthur, Carryl Roy, Amy Kellner, Tammy Fareed, Robert Mann

5

Nay:

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**MOTION CARRIED**

*The Board went into non-public session at 8:27 p.m.  
The Board came out of non-public session at 8:50 p.m.*

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION BY MEMBER FAREED TO ADJOURN  
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER KELLNER  
MOTION CARRIED  
5-0-0**

*The September 30, 2020 meeting of the Hollis School Board was adjourned at 8:51 p.m.*

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_