

1 **HOLLIS SCHOOL BOARD**
2 **OCTOBER 6, 2021**
3 **MEETING MINUTES**

4
5 A regular meeting of the Hollis School Board was conducted on Wednesday, October 6, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. at
6 the Hollis Upper Elementary School.

7
8 Tammy Fareed, Chairman, presided:

9
10 Members of the Board Present: Amy Kellner, Vice Chairman
11 Brooke Arthur, Secretary
12 Robert Mann
13 Carryl Roy
14

15 Members of the Board Absent:

16
17 Also Participating: Gina Bergskaug, Asst. Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction
18 Donna Smith, Assistant Business Administrator
19 Adam Kushmerek, School Resource/Community Policing Officer
20

21 **AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS** - None

22 **CORRESPONDENCE/RESIGNATIONS/NOMINATIONS**

23
24
25
26 Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug informed the Board of a letter of Intent to Retire received from Penny
27 Currier, Teacher, Hollis Primary School (HPS). In her letter, Ms. Currier states “She has loved teaching at HPS
28 and being a part of the community for the past 20 years.”
29

30 **MOTION BY MEMBER ARTHUR TO ACCEPT THE LETTER OF INTENT TO RETIRE**
31 **RECEIVED FROM PENNY CURRIER EFFECTIVE AT THE END OF THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL**
32 **YEAR**

33 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER ROY**

34 **MOTION CARRIED**

35 **5-0-0**
36

37 A letter of Intent to Retire was received from Ellen Lencsak, Nurse, HPS. In her letter she states “This is my
38 26th year at HPS. Every day is new, and every day has its rewards. I have watched our kids grow, shared their
39 smiles and their laughter, and listened to their stories happy and sad. At the end of the day, I know I have made
40 a difference even if in a very small way. I have had wonderful conversations with parents, and I thank them for
41 trusting their little ones to me when they cannot be there. I have worked alongside a fantastic team of teachers,
42 paras, and support staff, and I have made great friends.”
43

44 **MOTION BY MEMBER ARTHUR TO ACCEPT THE LETTER OF INTENT TO RETIRE**
45 **RECEIVED FROM ELLEN LENCSAK EFFECTIVE AT THE END OF THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL**
46 **YEAR**

47 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER ROY**

48 **MOTION CARRIED**

49 **5-0-0**

1 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
2

3 Hollis School Board [September 1, 2021](#)
4

5 *The following amendments were offered:*
6

- 7 Page 2, Line 13; correct the spelling of “device”
- 8 Page 2, Line 46; delete “get” before “hospitalized”
- 9 Page 6 Line 21; remove “effort” following “ongoing”
- 10 Page 6, Line 34; insert a comma following “outdoors” and replace “if” with “of”
- 11 Page 7, Line 47; replace “or” with “for”
- 12 Page 8, Line 11; correct the spelling of “surge”
- 13 Page 8, Line 44; remove “of” before “if”
- 14 Page 12, Line 27; replace “difference” with “different”
- 15 Page 14, Line 11; replace “spend” with “spent”
- 16 Page 14, Line 38; replace “Karen Jude” with “Karen Jew”

17
18 **MOTION BY MEMBER ARTHUR TO ACCEPT, AS AMENDED**
19 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER ROY**
20 **MOTION CARRIED**
21 **5-0-0**
22

23 **PUBLIC INPUT**
24

25 Dennis Johnson, 7 Main Street
26

27 At the last meeting, he spoke of concern with his step-son, who has sensory issues, having to wear a mask. He
28 was actually afraid to take his mask off and wore it throughout the entire day on the first day of school. He
29 voiced that he was afraid to kill people. That is how fearful he was. The School Board has put these kids in this
30 position. The psychological damage being imposed on children far outweighs kids that get the sniffles for one
31 day. These children will go through the entirety of their lives with a psychological issue. He suggested
32 weighing the argument logically would result in a decision for no masks.
33

34 He cited flu deaths from 2018-2020, which exceed deaths from COVID. He asked if any members of the Board
35 were asking for masks to be worn at that point. More kids died from the flu during those years. He finds it to
36 be hypocritical that now masks are required.
37

38 If masks work, wouldn't they be considered medical hazard waste once taken off? If that is the case, why is
39 there not a medical waste procedure followed at the front of the schools? He requested the Board think about
40 the logic and weigh the issues.
41

42 Chairman Fareed spoke of having had to consult with legal counsel as a result of having asked a member of the
43 audience to not clap after a speaker spoke. It is protected speech to boo and clap. She requested, but did not
44 demand, that members of the public resist the extraneous response.

1 Jaima Wilder, 48 Pierce Lane
2

3 Thanked the Board for its continued desire to put the education and wellbeing of the children as its first priority.
4 She is hopeful it is also the desire to ensure parent and taxpayer voices are represented through their decision
5 making process. She requested they listen with open ears, eyes, and hearts. Superintendent Corey stated on
6 September 9th that the Board was interested in seeing what happened in Hollis and Brookline. More time was
7 needed to see what was happening in the COOP versus the elementary schools; mask optional versus mask
8 mandate. Since then, we have celebrated Old Home Days, many games in the bleachers together, and many
9 other extra-curricular activities. Her understanding is that the Board gave Superintendent Corey sole discretion
10 to lift the mandate when he felt it safe to do so.
11

12 The number of COVID positive cases is far less than the number of other viruses that are slower spreaders such
13 as Strep, MONO, RSV and other unnamed viruses. She spoke with the school nurse when her children showed
14 symptoms and she informed her of what she was seeing. It was expected that more people would be sick given
15 the fact that we were not exposed to anything during the lockdown. It is good to see everyone's immune system
16 building natural immunities.
17

18 Our children play sports together, play at the playground unmasked. Masks worn at school do not keep them
19 safe. It hurts them physically because they are breathing bacteria in the mask, carbon dioxide and they lack
20 oxygen needed for development and growth. It stiffens their learning because they read lips to pronounce
21 words, hear correct phenetic sounds to read, and learn empathy through facial expression.
22

23 All of the decisions you make today will affect the wellbeing of our children now and for years to come.
24

25 If, after all of the research that has been presented to the Board, there is still a false sense of safety when you
26 wear masks, wear them, but stop taking away our rights as parents and make the masks optional.
27

28 Joe Garruba, 28 Winchester Drive
29

30 Stated clapping is for the people who are coming forward to share their experiences. Chairman Fareed
31 reiterated it is free speech. She simply made a request.
32

33 Mr. Garruba spoke of his support of the comments of the two previous speakers.
34

35 He commented on the proposed additional position for non-education staff. It appears the position is to address
36 Right-to-Know requests, updating the public on social media, etc. This pandemic is an unusual situation and
37 adding a permanent salaried position because of this is irresponsible. Instead of that, a part-time position for a
38 short duration should be considered.
39

40 It seems that employee would be acting as a public relations reporter for information coming from the schools.
41 He does not see a need to pay non-educational staff for that role. To disseminate information on social media
42 platforms that may or may not be accessible to everyone in Town is not appropriate for a paid school position.
43 Information from the school should be shared on the school's website.
44

45 Eric Morin, 18 Jambard Road
46

47 Spoke of RSV noting only a few who contract it develop serious illness much like COVID-19. Children may
48 have symptoms similar to any other respiratory infection. RSV is spread like any other cold; droplets, sneezes.
49 RSV can be prevented. According to the CDC website one should cover coughs and sneezes, wash hands

1 frequently and correctly, avoid sharing cups and eating utensils with others and refrain from kissing others.
2 Never in time were masks mandated to stop the spread of RSV.

3
4 With a child in daycare and co-workers with children in daycare, he can attest that RSV is currently spreading
5 like it does every fall and winter. The test used to detect RSV happens to be the same type of test used to detect
6 COVID. The State does not report RSV cases to the CDC, but Massachusetts does. Based on the CDC website,
7 Massachusetts PCR tests for RSV started to rise significantly as they do every fall. Massachusetts is now
8 averaging approx. 1,000 tests/week for RSV. The average positivity rate was around 3% at the end of July and
9 has now risen to nearly 30%.

10
11 According to the CDC, RSV leads to approximately 58,000 hospitalizations/year in children and an annual
12 average of a couple hundred to 500 deaths. Since the pandemic started, according to the CDC, there has been
13 134 deaths attributed to COVID-19 for the ages of 5-11 and 164 for 12-15. We are going on year 2 with
14 COVID-19 with a total of 4,228 children ages 0-17 hospitalized with COVID nationwide.

15
16 We keep hearing about clusters in the State, many of which happened in school districts where masks are
17 required. How many of these kids end up in the hospital or died; likely zero. What happens when a child does
18 get COVID; a positive case for most of these children means absolutely nothing. It does however mean long-
19 lasting immunity from the virus.

20
21 Faculty and staff that have chosen to be, have been vaccinated. There is simply no need to force children to
22 wear masks. They do nothing to stop the spread. They are doing more harm than good to our children. Should
23 be a parental choice. Please reconsider.

24
25 Lauren Craig, 17 Hills Farm Lane

26
27 She and her husband have two children. The eldest is in the high school and the youngest in 6th grade. It is a bit
28 strange dropping one child off at school not wearing a mask and another wearing a mask. As a mother, it goes
29 against every fiber of her being to cover her child's nose and mouth and send him out for the day for school.

30
31 It does not make sense to her that children are wearing masks in class. They are 3' apart and yet they take their
32 masks off to eat lunch in the building and while outside playing. To her it does not make sense that if it is a
33 deadly pandemic and masks are for your health and safety, why are they removing them at all?

34
35 She moved from Winthrop, MA. She was in a house that had been in her family for 52 years. Her family
36 thought she was nuts when she said she was moving to New Hampshire as they are all in Massachusetts. They
37 spent from March until July 23rd on Zillow and went up 3 hours north to Maine, looked in North Carolina,
38 South Carolina, Florida (mask free land), and said we have to be close to family, let's go to the Live Free or Die
39 state of New Hampshire. Is this not that? She left her whole family behind and moved her kids during the most
40 crucial part of their lives. They are both shy and they both have said to her I feel like I am invisible because
41 they do not have any friends yet.

42
43 You know that the kids do not get COVID, and if they do, it is a 99.997% chance that they will survive.

1 Jim Gill, 30 Milton Place

2
3 The situation reminds him of an episode of Star Trek where the Enterprise was sent to a planet where there was
4 a civil war underway and when they landed on the planet one group had faces that were white on the right and
5 black on the left and the others were black on the right and white on the left.

6
7 That is what we have happening here; fear, except you are wearing your fear on the right side and his is on the
8 opposite side. Your fear is that if you make masks optional there will be hell to pay from a public health
9 standpoint. His deep seated fear is that by forcing young children to wear a mask we do not know the long-term
10 consequences.

11
12 Fear is false evidence appearing real. From the Board's perspective, for 2 years we have had a public narrative
13 that has been rigorously scientifically everything battened down. If you accept the public narrative then it
14 would be reasonable to have the fear that if you made masks optional all hell would break loose from a public
15 health standpoint, but when you look at the public narrative, everything that has been said to us from science
16 has been proven false. The latest is 26 scientists have come out and proven Mr. Collins and Dr. Fauci as having
17 been unequivocally untruthful.

18
19 Our public health narratives, the injection going into the shoulder was only going to stay in the shoulder, what
20 do we know now, no. If you examine your fear and the false evidence appearing real and the fear that we
21 possess on an experiment with all kinds of things that are being experienced now, he thinks the fear rationally is
22 far more founded than that of the Board.

23
24 Member Arthur clarified there is a mask mandate in the building.

25
26 Karen Dodge, 73 Alsun Drive

27
28 As the only teacher in attendance she wished to share what she is hearing is sincere and accurate. She can tell
29 you what children wearing a mask in the classroom looks like for 6 hours; they do not keep the masks on their
30 faces, masks are put around their throats (where bacteria gathers), they use them to sneeze in, wipe noses, etc.
31 There is no standard for the mask and no expectation that they would or should work effectively. The children
32 take them off repeatedly. Unfortunately, what has happened is there is a mentality of policing the wearing of
33 masks; happens to teachers and children. They go outside and drop it on the ground and then put it back on.
34 Scientifically that mask is nothing more than a moist petri dish for bacteria.

35
36 She spoke of bacteria that has been found on masks worn by children, not after 6 hours but after 20 minutes.
37 Children are afraid to take their masks off, and there is no reason for them to have that fear. A mask mandate
38 cannot be justified. It is irrational and is imposing a message on children that she does not think they will ever
39 recover from. Masking is the first step in compliance.

40
41 Jim Crittenden, 232 Worcester Road

42
43 Spoke of totalitarianism; what we are living under. We are reminded again this week now that the Attorney
44 General is sicking the FBI on all of us who are willing to stand up and speak to the School Boards and maybe
45 disagree with some of the things you have done or are planning to do. Who does not have to wear masks these
46 days for inside gatherings? Who does and who does not? If you look at Barack Obama's birthday party or
47 some of the Hollywood award parties; who is not wearing the masks; the elite. Who are wearing masks there,
48 the waitresses, the valets. It is a class difference. If you ask them why they do not have to wear masks when
49 the surrounding servers have to, they make it very clear; it is because they are sophisticated. If you are

1 sophisticated, you do not have to wear a mask for interior gatherings. How do you become sophisticated; it is a
2 self-identifying trait just like your gender these days. If you feel sophisticated, you are sophisticated and you do
3 not have to wear masks.

4
5 Just like in Garrison Keillor's Lake Wobegon, we know all of the children in Hollis are at least a little bit above
6 average, so they are sophisticated, so we call them sophisticated, and they do not have to wear masks. That
7 satisfies the CDC, and the rest of the government they do not care because sophisticated people do not have to
8 wear masks. There is a simple solution. You could either do a blanket or have parents write in my child is
9 sophisticated and does not have to wear a mask. If it seems sarcastic really what it is pointing out is it is all
10 about the symbolism. It really is not about the healthcare. The mask really is not doing anything. It is all
11 which class you are trying to fit into.

12 13 **PRINCIPALS' REPORT**

14
15 Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug highlighted items from the Administrative Report included as part of the
16 [agenda](#) packet.

17
18 New basketball polls are under construction at the Hollis Upper Elementary School (HUES). Work will start on
19 the fencing project on the field in November.

20
21 Custodial and kitchen support is sought at HUES.

22
23 The report highlights work being done to address social emotional needs. At HUES, there are mixed cohorts for
24 lunch; not all 5 sections of each grade level eat together, groups of 2 and 3 classes. Those cohorts also stay
25 together when going outdoors for recess. Every 6 weeks those classes switch cohorts. In grade 6, they have
26 focused their work on fixed and growth mindset and strategies and how to build resilience and confidence. In
27 grade 5, their morning meetings are focused on getting to know someone and sharing outside experiences as a
28 way to build connections between their peers. In grade 4, they are sharing about their names and how important
29 it is to know ourselves to develop those connections. Choose Love lessons are implemented in all grade
30 levels. Lunch groups have started for additional socialization.

31
32 At HPS, although lunch is taking place in the classroom, cohorts are mixed on the playground; 2 and 3 classes
33 and instead of switching at 6 weeks they are switching at the trimester. The nurse is sharing health lessons
34 about safe and healthy eating spaces, healthy habits, standard precautions, impact of personal health choices.
35 These are lessons we teach year after year.

36
37 In Guidance, students are working on identifying feelings that their pets may have as it is easier to talk about the
38 feelings of a pet potentially than to share a personal feeling. They are reading books like Worry Moves On and
39 Ruby Finds a Worry and identifying there is a strategy that if you notice and identify a feeling then you can
40 breathe through that feeling, practice self-talk and talking it out with someone. They are also looking at
41 gratitude and how to practice gratitude.

42
43 They are working on registration for BOKS (Build our Kids Strength), which took place a few years prior to last
44 school year. There is a 6-week section for BOKS. It is a before-school program for 12 students at a time. It is
45 outdoors (space in the gym for inclement weather). It is a movement experience designed to help kids ready for
46 learning in the classroom.

1 Town meetings are coming back at HPS. They will be via Zoom. The first meeting is about respect yourself,
2 respect property, and respect others.

3
4 There is a need for 4 paraprofessionals at HPS. There is a new Guidance Counselor at HUES, Evelyn
5 O'Connor. WING Awards are back at HUES.

6
7 Member Mann noted the September packet cited a total enrollment of 642 and the October enrollment numbers
8 are reported as 625. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated she would look into that number. Part of that
9 could be move-outs and late notification. Member Mann spoke of appreciating information that shows the net
10 positives/negatives and educational specifications. Chairman Fareed noted the enrollment identified in August
11 was 624.

12
13 Member Arthur remarked all of the items identified under social emotional needs seem great, but do not seem
14 different from pre-pandemic. She questioned what kind of responses are happening or might be needed
15 specifically in response to the experience of the pandemic.

16
17 In a communication from the New Hampshire School Board Association, information was provided on a
18 nationwide increase in school refusal and some of the resources schools are having to enact more rigorously.
19 That is one example of increased behaviors and experiences that we may have to look at. Assistant
20 Superintendent Bergskaug responded the school refusal is an issue nationwide. It is less of an issue in our
21 district, she believes, because we were open last year. Some students did not attend school at all, and really did
22 not have much interaction with school folks for a year and a half so to transition back is a challenge. To find
23 some of those kids is a challenge.

24
25 She has spoken with her south central region (other Assistant Superintendents) and some of the issues that those
26 nearby districts are experiencing are different from what we are experiencing. What we are seeing is increased
27 difficulty with play. Teachers are doing incredible work teaching kids how to interact with each other again and
28 how to play; lessons that we did not have to teach before. It is not part of a set curriculum, but just part of
29 understanding social interactions. Those are some of the things they are spending a lot of time with that are
30 hard to put down as a lesson.

31
32 They continue to encourage classes to go outdoors; do the same learning, but outside and in a movement
33 activity where you are incorporating a little bit of that play aspect within the context of a lesson.

34 35 **DISCUSSION**

36 37 • Reopening Plan Discussion

38
39 Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug thanked all residents who have provide input both oral and written.

40
41 There are mixed groups at recess in both of the schools as a means of increasing socialization this year over last
42 year. Groups are mixed at lunch at HUES and are looking to move to that at HPS. There are different
43 challenges given the space in that building. They are acknowledging the importance of that social interaction.
44 One way they are doing that is by switching the cohorts over time so that students have the opportunity to
45 interact with all of their peers. They are mixing groups when delivering services, e.g. if multiple students are
46 receiving additional support in reading, they are pulled from multiple classes to work together.

1 To date, there have been 2 cases in the Hollis schools. That is attributed to our community, teachers, students,
2 families, custodians, all involved as they are following a set standard.

3
4 Looking at the data within the community, we currently have 29 cases in both of the communities. Both
5 communities are looked at. Although these are Hollis schools, a lot of Hollis students have siblings in the
6 COOP and those students are with our Brookline cohort. We have 29 cases currently. There were 12 new cases
7 today, but for the past few days it had been down from the prior week.

8
9 We have a higher vaccination rate than the State at 65-70% in Hollis and 53-60% in Brookline. It is another
10 figure to look at and another preventative measure that is an option for those who choose and are old enough.

11
12 She and Superintendent Corey meet continually with medical professionals in the community and discuss all of
13 these aspects. They continue to advocate for masks. Many of these people are pediatricians that treat the
14 students in our district. That is important. Our teachers are stressing handwashing. Hand sanitizer is available
15 and the same cleaning protocols that were in place last year are in place. We are doing a fantastic job. We do
16 understand the length of the day and how difficult it is to wear a mask the full time, which is why the students
17 are not fully masked at all times. We have mask breaks that are more regular this year than last year. There
18 was a time when masks were required outdoors, which is no longer the case.

19
20 Many people have asked for a matrix for when masks are required and not required. Looking at the various
21 matrix options that have been thrown out over the past year and a half, they tend to be geared either towards
22 always wearing masks or never wearing masks. We are looking for how we slowly change from masks to no
23 masks. A matrix does not really work, e.g., would we look at community data or school case data.

24
25 Community groups, e.g., baseball, soccer, lacrosse, have their own set of protocols. We are working together to
26 determine the policies that need to be in place.

27
28 She and Superintendent Corey have discussed targeted masking. We are not there yet but would like to discuss
29 the idea of moving toward being intentional about when the mask is worn and when it is not. The example
30 provided was reading and the importance of seeing the teacher's mouth move as the story is being read. If
31 students are sitting at their desks and are 3' apart during an hour-long reading session, is it appropriate to
32 remove masks understanding that if a student were to get up from their desk for whatever reason, they would
33 put their mask on. We are not there yet, but that is the direction they would like to go in as a district, a slow shift
34 over time.

35
36 Last year we were open all year. Not many districts can say they were open 5 days/week for all students who
37 wanted to be present in the building. We did a phenomenal job. We kept our cases very low. Other districts
38 came to us to ask for assistance when it was then required of them to do what we had been doing all along. The
39 desire is for that to continue and to provide a safe environment for all of our students.

40
41 Additional information will be learned around the availability of a vaccine for our younger students. That is
42 part of it. Once again, not mandated, but if there is another tool available for families who choose a tool then
43 there is an additional option available.

44
45 Quarantine rules have changed. Last year students who were in quarantine or isolation were able to be shifted
46 to remote learning. We do not have that option anymore. Last year the Governor put us in a State of
47 Emergency. Which is what allowed the remote classrooms. That is not allowed any longer. We do not have
48 any other option. Should we have a ton of cases and students are out of the building, we do not have the tools

1 we had last year. That is another change that is making it a little bit difficult to be potentially as lenient as one
2 might want us to be.

3
4 We read about the social emotional piece every day. It has been a district focus long before COVID hit. We
5 gave our teachers the tools they needed prior to COVID, during COVID, and now, to look at some of these
6 signs/symptoms and develop strategies both for the teachers to work with students but also for the students to
7 begin to self-advocate and identify ways that they can help themselves when struggling with any number of
8 topics. Masks are a part of that, but so is the stress of the world right now. There are so many pieces that are
9 really heavy for everyone. All of that is contributing to the challenges being faced.

10
11 Member Mann spoke of sharing the same concern with the potential for an outbreak and the possibility it could
12 cause us to close a school. When the Board was deliberating the mask mandate in September, the concern he
13 had was just that, how do we keep the schools open.

14
15 He stated appreciation for the work that is being done to think and move towards creative ways to reduce mask
16 wearing. He encouraged those efforts to continue. He is interested to hear from Superintendent Corey in
17 November in regard to the path to get there. He would like to get as close to mask optional as possible. He has
18 heard from the community the concerns that exist. He would like to move in that direction as quickly as we
19 can.

20
21 Members Arthur and Roy echoed the comments of the previous speaker.

22
23 Member Mann commented a decision to close the schools based on an outbreak or other incident sits solely
24 with the Superintendent and his office. The Board does not make those operating decisions. The Board is a
25 policy making board and approves expenditures and allocations. This is how we ran last year too with the
26 situation we were. There is discussion, of course, but from a day-to-day perspective, if something happens,
27 keeping schools open and running is a responsibility solely placed on the Superintendent.

28
29 Chairman Fareed remarked she is trying to respect the points that have been made by the public. It is clear she
30 is a person who wants to err on the side of safety. She is intimately familiar with how the various masks work.
31 The reason they can be tested for terrible stuff is because they trap it. She agrees with everyone who says
32 children need to see faces. She agrees the masks are something more than an inconvenience although she
33 disagrees that they are harmful. She cares a great deal that people see things differently and we have to
34 reconcile these differing views.

35
36 The Assistant Superintendent pointed out that we have had 2 cases here. The interesting point one of the
37 speakers made is that there is supposed to be this sort of experiment between the elementary schools and the
38 COOP where we have mask optional. She questioned what is being seen at the high school and middle school
39 in terms of the number of cases. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated within the COOP there have been 6
40 cases in 2 buildings. In all 4 of our elementary schools, including the notice that went out today at 5:00 p.m.,
41 we have had 4 cases in 4 buildings.

42
43 Asked about staff, she stated when the notices go out, they are not notifying whether the cases are students or
44 staff.

45
46 Chairman Fareed stated her belief all of the different tools being used, masks, vaccinations, those who sneeze in
47 their sleeve instead of coughing in faces, etc. are making a difference. Many she talks to in the medical field in
48 our southern New Hampshire region believe that there seems to be a stronger compliance in the State with CDC

1 type recommendations than in a lot of other places. She does not want to take away the critical one and find out
2 it was a mistake. On the other hand, we also do not want to always operate from a place of fear.

3
4 Asked about the concept of targeted masking and why we are not there yet, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug
5 remarked there are a few factors in place. It is easier to have masks and remove them than to have no masks
6 and then require them. It is easier in the learning process for children to know that on the bus and in school they
7 are masked than to keep a mask sanitary when it is off but on. Those are silly little pieces. Another huge
8 component is the first 6 weeks of school is imperative for the teacher to establish a classroom community, and
9 part of that is understanding when it is okay to get up and walk around or consult a peer, etc. Some students
10 who have not been in school for some time, have to relearn what it is like to be a student in class. For her, that
11 is part of it.

12
13 Chairman Fareed commented she has spent hundreds and hundreds of hours volunteering in the buildings prior
14 to her service on the School Board, and she knows what is being described. It takes a couple of months before
15 the kids are reminding the teacher of the routine. The children then know what is expected and they enjoy
16 having that mastery over knowledge, self, and even over the adults once in a while.

17
18 The question was asked of whether the Superintendent can shift gears at any point between meetings and how
19 much of a role the Board has in that decision. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug responded just the same as
20 the Superintendent has the authority to do a mask mandate at the COOP if the need arises based on clusters,
21 etc., the same is true for the removal of masks or making them optional. He is within the power granted to him
22 to be able to do that.

23
24 Chairman Fareed remarked there are 625 students and 135 employees in our two buildings. Each one has their
25 own medical background, their own unique protected confidential specific needs, and we do not get to decide
26 who is vulnerable to disease and who is not. We are here trying to make policy and consider recommendations
27 based on the independent/individualized needs of 800 people. It is a difficult thing to make a one size fits all
28 policy. We did not get through last year as well as we did because we got lucky or because we over-estimated
29 the enemy. We got through it the way we did thanks to the incredible moxie and sweat equity put in by the
30 staff; senior staff, administrative staff, building staff who worked and continue to work harder than most can
31 imagine. It is through a honed, fine-edged intelligence and judgment that she feels allowed our community to
32 remain mostly whole/mostly healthy and she hesitates to second guess their internal knowledge of the student
33 and adult population in our buildings and their carefully gathered information basis for what is occurring in the
34 community.

35
36 She also agrees with those who provided public input that on the surface of it, it seems maybe we could lower
37 our guard, but she is not that one who likes to lower the guard when she knows the enemy is lurking behind
38 bushes and corners.

39
40 Chairman Mann commented he cannot help but wonder, given the input received from community members
41 and the promise of maybe a vaccine being approved for younger children, that perhaps we consider
42 revisiting/reconsideration of the re-opening plan. He is uncertain if the November or December meeting would
43 be appropriate. He was not suggesting a date but was suggesting that beyond an update, there be a check-in to
44 say what we are doing from this point on. We want an update, and we will potentially take an action to support
45 or change direction and put a date on it. He believes having that discussion would go a long way in the
46 community.

1 Chairman Fareed spoke of the remote learning option and reiterated that last year, because of the Emergency
2 Order, we were allowed to develop remote learning. Not only has the Emergency Order been lifted and
3 therefore the standing legislation around distance learning not generally being allowed, but currently the
4 Department of Education is debating creating a new ruling that would prevent districts from using remote
5 learning for COVID emergencies. It is not a ruling that has been put in place yet but there is strong movement
6 among the Board of Education at the State level to disallow the use of remote learning due to any COVID
7 related closures regardless of clusters or anything else. However, the ruling that is under consideration now
8 would allow schools to use remote learning on snow days.

9
10 If we look at all of the pieces we had in place last year and see how few of those pieces we have in place this
11 year, it argues for caution and prudence.

12
13 Chairman Fareed asked, once the vaccine is approved (if it is) for children 5-12, are we allowed to ask for
14 voluntary input from families who choose to vaccinate their children to try to get a sense of the percentage of
15 our students that are being vaccinated? Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug responded we are able to ask, but
16 she would imagine the practice would continue, as a district, not to ask. Every year when you do your
17 registration you upload your health records. Some families have chosen to include vaccination information
18 about COVID as part of their health records and some have chosen not to. It is not a requirement, and we will
19 not ask, as a district. We can engage in that conversation for informational purposes.

20
21 A look at the dashboard shows data that is reported right now for ages 12-19 in Hollis. That provides an idea as
22 to our population in the middle and high school. She would imagine the dashboard would later have a 5-11
23 category.

24
25 Member Arthur asked about moving towards targeted masking and if there is consideration of beginning with
26 teachers. Asked if there is a reason not to do that, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated it is illegal. We
27 are either masks for everyone or masks optional for everyone, but we cannot pick and choose who gets to have
28 the option and who does not.

29
30 • Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Year End Numbers

31
32 Auditors have completed their field work. The year ended with a savings in expenses of \$1,225,684 and the
33 FY20 carryover (\$85,690 – were able to offset some of the expenses with COVID funding) the total for
34 expenses was \$1,311,338. Primarily savings were due to COVID-19, e.g., special education contracted
35 services were limited, bus transportation costs were cut, and we had a significant hiring savings due to new
36 employees coming in on a lower step in the salary table.

37
38 Revenue came in at \$18,560 less than budgeted. The Federal food service extra revenue offsets the local food
39 service sales revenue as the State issued free meals all year long to the students. In the end, revenue less
40 expenses left a fund balance of \$876,928.78 to be returned to the tax base to reduce the amount that has to be
41 raised through taxes to support the current budget.

42
43 Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug noted the fund balance is what remains after the air handler 3 expenditure.

44
45 Asked to provide clarification on the term carryover, Donna Smith, Assistant Business Administrator, stated
46 any purchase orders that remain open at the end of the year are addressed by carrying over the associated dollars
47 into the next fiscal year. This past year, when funding was received related to COVID, it was used to offset
48 some of the expenses that had been carried over.

49 The MS27 is the documentation sent to the Department of Revenue; best estimate prior to the audit.

1
2 In addition to savings achieved through new hires coming in lower on the salary scale, a number of positions
3 went unfilled.

4
5 • Fiscal Year 2021-2022 First Quarter Revenue and Expense Report

6
7 The report provided with the [agenda](#) notes an expense balance (*as of 9-16-21*) of \$18,064. With a revenue
8 balance of \$6,595, the *projected* UFB is \$24,659.

9
10 • Fiscal Year 2023 – Draft SAU Budget

11
12 The draft budget will be presented to the SAU 41 Governing Board on October 14th.

13
14 The FY23 adjusted budget (default budget if proposed budget is not approved) is \$2,018,210. Proposed is a
15 budget that includes the addition of the Communications Specialist position and Board approved salaries
16 (\$2,107,176 or 7.6% increase). Options include; leaving in the Communications Specialist position but
17 removing the Board approved salaries (\$2,091,176 or 6.8%) and removing the Communications Specialist
18 position and Board approved salaries (\$2,104,538 or 2.9% increase).

19
20 Salary (all in) for the Communications Specialist position is \$76,638. Districts across the Country are moving
21 in this direction. COVID has made it more of an urgent need. We have been hearing for years about a
22 communications person or marketing person. Without a newspaper we do not have an easy way for those who
23 are not a family in the district to receive information. Noted were some of the responsibilities of the position
24 (included with agenda); writing communication policies and procedures for handling sensitive information,
25 putting together a comprehensive communication plan, disseminating facts about school to the public through
26 media.

27
28 Regarding the Board approved salary adjustments (\$16,000), there is an SAU Sub-committee looking at
29 salaries. Should the committee wish to make adjustments, there would be a line item within the budget to
30 accommodate that.

31
32 The SAU Budget Sub-committee felt strongly about maintaining the position of Communications Specialist in
33 the proposed budget.

34
35 Member Roy remarked the Communication Specialist position has been questioned. It is not just responding to
36 Right-to-Know requests as was spoken of. Frankly, you need a dedicated person who is in charge of the
37 communications coming out of the building. The full-time jobs of those employed by the SAU are to ensure
38 that our schools are running. In a crisis communication situation you need someone who is dedicated and
39 knows how to do that. Superintendent Corey is a fantastic public speaker and could certainly do that, but that
40 should not be his job. His job is much larger than that; spans our entire SAU. This role is one many school
41 districts are employing, and one that ensures the communication that is being given to the public is consistent.

42
43 The comment was made earlier of why it would not be a part-time position given the current atmosphere is an
44 exception. The need for communications has evolved over the years COVID notwithstanding. COVID has put
45 a spotlight on the importance of the position. She does not agree that it should be a part-time or short term
46 position. As is the case with any position, if it becomes a situation where the position is no longer needed as a
47 full time equivalent or at all, there is always the ability to eliminate it.

48 The person in this position would not be looking to communicate through a single forum, but through all the
49 different available avenues of communication.

1
2 Member Mann reiterated the discussion of such a position has been going on for several years. The level of
3 work has increased as has the challenge for good solid public relation connections. He spoke of the amount of
4 work involved in conducting public forums, etc. to engage and inform the public. He would like to see the
5 skillset of senior staff focused where intended; curriculum and curriculum delivery.

6
7 He commented on the uniqueness of the district in that they are owners/landlords of the 4 Lund Lane facility as
8 well as the water system that supplies not only this district but the COOP School District and all of the area in
9 Monument Square. When experiencing issues with the water system, our educational experts were being taxed
10 by having to become water specialists. Having the responsibility for the communication role is seen as similar,
11 where the educational staff is tasked with responsibilities beyond education.

12
13 This role has been needed for years. This is the time, and we need to really get behind it, and make a conscious
14 effort to bring the community along as to why this is needed.

15
16 Vice Chairman Kellner questioned when the Board would be made aware of the results of the compensation
17 study. Member Mann spoke of a meeting having been conducted. He has engaged in discussions with the
18 Superintendent around some of the work. He was uncertain when the committee would meet next.

19
20 Chairman Fared spoke of having questioned what was involved in responding to the large Right-to-Know
21 filing. It is still not known what the total cost/manhours were. There were thousands of pieces of paper
22 involved in the documentation request. When she asked the Assistant Superintendent who did that work, the
23 response was everyone across SAU41 through the hierarchy beyond the principals, e.g., specialists, teachers,
24 etc. We had to respond to the filing specific to the language within it, and it required the unearthing of
25 thousands of emails, documents, and the redacting, through legal counsel, of anything that was protected. It
26 took 6 weeks to answer one Right-to-Know request. Thousands of copies printed, and our Assistant
27 Superintendent, Principals, classroom teachers, specialists doing work that is not to their highest level of skill.

28
29 The number of communication-based issues that arise within the SAU and responded to by a wide variety of
30 employees is great. These employees are suspending policy work, strategic planning work, etc. to make tens of
31 thousands of photocopies, prepare press releases, disseminate information to families, ensure postings on the
32 website are correct, etc. The job description is a good start but needs to be expanded not only to show the scope
33 of the responsibilities, but to identify where the burden of that workload will be reduced as a result, and the
34 benefits of having a point person for the public to communicate with.

35
36 Member Mann suggested that material could be developed and provided when the Board is engaging the public
37 in the budget process.

38
39 Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug commented on it being difficult to quantify the amount of time spent by her
40 office, that of the Business Administrator, building Principals and secretaries on responding to the Right-to-
41 Know filing. For one request, the legal cost was \$8,036.50.

42
43 • ESSER I, II, III Funding - Update/Discussion

44
45 In 2019-2020 the district was allocated \$7,918.03 in CARES Act / Elementary and Secondary School
46 Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding. That was used to purchase 31 Chromebooks for remote learning.
47 The 2020-2021 allocation from CRRSA Act/ESSER II funding was \$30,859.17. This could be utilized for
48 educational needs as a result of COVID, learning loss, diagnostic tools to assess and address learning loss and
49 learning gaps, to improve indoor air quality. Budgeted items are proposed and approved/rejected. Nothing that

1 we proposed can be part of what is currently budgeted for; has to be in addition to (cannot supplant the budget).
2 We were in the middle of an energy project, which took away HVAC items. What was proposed were both
3 math and ELA directed work via an online learning tool subscription with content specific assignments pushed
4 out by the teacher based on need. That was roughly \$5,800. This past summer we had a summer learning
5 academy and there was data supported targeted math, targeted ELA and cross-curricular skill deficits and gaps.
6 Some were by invite and some were open to anyone who wanted to participate in a book club with their teacher,
7 but in addition there were targeted dates when we were reviewing vocabulary and understanding the content.
8 That was about \$25,000. There still are open items and that will be good for another two years. The hope is to
9 continue the summer learning academy.
10

11 The 2021-2022 American Rescue Plan Act/Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund known
12 as ESSER III is currently being proposed and approved/denied. In May, there was a requirement to submit a
13 great deal of data around the number of in-person and remote students and how many days students were out of
14 school due to quarantining. In June, they proposed a reopening plan and then had to send out a proposed use of
15 funds. All of those happened prior to being allocated any funds. A lot of this was big planning based on
16 feedback received from the community either via email or public input but also the internal stakeholder
17 meetings that identify need and how to support need. A survey was recently sent out to all families seeking
18 input.
19

20 The fund is for essentially everything ESSER II was to cover; high quality diagnostic tools to assess and address
21 student learning loss, student learning gaps, resulting from disruption in educational services. Inspecting,
22 testing, maintenance, repair, replacement, and upgrade projects to improve indoor air quality in school facilities,
23 prevention and mitigation strategies for COVID and a mandatory 20% of the funding to address learning loss.
24

25 In the proposal submitted over the summer, there were items such as decrease class size to proactively address
26 learning gaps and learning loss and learning academy along with intervention strategies throughout the year.
27

28 As of this time. We have a partial allocation of slightly over \$45,000. Eventually that number will go up to
29 \$69,305. That is to be used over the next 2.5 years.
30

31 Community feedback received from the survey was to provide additional supports for math and writing
32 instruction, additional supports for homework in both math and writing, decrease class size, increase supports
33 for social emotional learning, and COVID testing.
34

35 There is a different source of funding for COVID testing should there be a desire to pursue. There is not yet an
36 approved budget as additional community input is waited for.
37

38 Vice Chairman Kellner questioned if there is the opportunity to utilize the funding to accommodate additional
39 outdoor classroom space. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug responded for a 20' x 40' outdoor pavilion, the
40 cost is over \$35,000 without concrete, which is expensive. A great deal more requirements must be met for
41 building projects, including a requirement for 20% of the funding to be used to address learning loss.
42

43 Chairman Fareed questioned, if a number of students in a particular cohort were identified as requiring
44 significant assistance to get caught up from being out last year, could the funds be used to augment the cost of
45 an existing educator for that purpose. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated you could create new
46 positions and we have done that in other districts, with this funding. It is permitted. An existing employee
47 could apply for a new position that was created. Chairman Fareed questioned if a specialist currently at a 0.8
48 position could become a 1.0 position to address learning loss and was told that could be done.
49

1 There are four open paraprofessional positions at HPS. Some of those are specifically to address needs
2 identified in legal documents. We are stretched thin.

3
4 Member Mann commented learning loss is something that has been a relatively recent concern given the
5 operating models we have been in due to the pandemic. If the need cannot be fully addressed through use of the
6 allocated funds, he would be interested in hearing what the Board can do to provide the necessary supports.

7
8 Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug commented being in a global pandemic and there being so much in society
9 that is weighing on everybody, it is impacting everyone's ability to make decisions, problem solve, be available
10 to learn. But we were open. While our averages in state testing do not look like they did two years prior, if you
11 look at state level data, we did a phenomenal job, which is 100% attributed to who we are as a school district;
12 our teachers and support staff are phenomenal. They worked tirelessly, and it was not easy.

13
14 This year, same thing; not easy, but they show up, put a smile on their face, and that is the normalcy for the
15 students. It is not perfect. We are wearing masks, cannot socialize with everyone, but we are getting there.

16
17 Chairman Fared commented on the importance of recognizing that learning loss happens every summer with
18 all of our students. We know what to do and how to do it, we just need to identify the gaps.

19
20 • Professional Development - Update

21
22 Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated last June, during the Professional Development (PD) days, teachers
23 reviewed all of their students' progress and looked at, as a whole, are we seeing a difference in what we would
24 expect them to be at, at the end of a particular grade. They also looked at individual students that might have a
25 particular gap or need and identified all of those. That data was moved to their receiving teachers. During the
26 PD days in August, teachers were given time to plan for the students they had in front of them rather than
27 waiting 6 weeks to figure out areas of need.

28
29 On August 30th, a well-known educator, Thomas Guskey, University of Kentucky, spoke to all of the teachers
30 of differentiating learning with mastery post-pandemic. Specifically, given the pandemic and where we are
31 seeing maybe some strengths in areas we typically have not seen, but also some gaps in certain areas, how do
32 we identify their skills and then bring them to mastery across all standards. They were given that opening and
33 then given time with their teams to plan for the students they have in front of them; how are we going to maybe
34 spiral in an additional lesson to reinforce certain skills that might be weaker this year over prior years.

35
36 In addition, we have had in-house professional development on many subjects; some for smaller groups and
37 some for the entire school such as trauma informed schools, social emotional learning, mindfulness. During the
38 November and December professional development days there will be suicide prevention training and looking
39 at curriculum both from an implementation and evaluation given what we are seeing with COVID and potential
40 learning gaps, but also from a resources perspective and ensuring once again that we are on the same page and
41 the resources that are being utilized are documented appropriately within our curriculum.

42
43 Asked if feedback is sought from staff following these professional development days, she stated that is
44 typically done after the November date. Pre-COVID they did "For Teachers by Teachers" where teachers
45 presented their own specialties and teachers signed up for different things they wanted to learn. Feedback was
46 sought on that.

47
48 • 4 Lund Lane Lease - Update

1 Member Mann informed the Board the committee met prior to the September Board meeting and will meet
2 again next week. They have subject matter expertise looking at commercial space and relating that to the SAU
3 office building. The SAU office building is a unique entity. It is not a private residence but not quite
4 commercial space either. The idea of a triple net lease that would equate to a commercial property does not fit
5 the SAU building (do not pay taxes).

6
7 Efforts are underway to put a value on the building and relate that to other options. From there, the committee
8 will be able to build a framework for the lease. The focus is less about the term of the lease and more about the
9 components that the lease has to be built around. There likely needs to be a secondary discussion around the
10 term. The other aspect to consider is the idea of renovations.

11
12 Chairman Fareed spoke of fit-up costs that may be required to make a particular commercial space suitable for
13 this use. Member Mann remarked the rule of thumb is \$102/sq. ft. for fit-up.

14 DELIBERATIONS

15
16
17 *There being no objection, the Board went out of the regular order of business to take up the Memorandum of*
18 *Understanding with the Hollis Police Department.*

- 19
20 • To see what action the Board wishes to take regarding the Memorandum of Understanding with the Hollis
21 Police Department

22
23 **MOTION BY MEMBER KELLNER TO APPROVE THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**
24 **BETWEEN THE HOLLIS SCHOOL DISTRICT AND HOLLIS POLICE DEPARTMENT FOR THE**
25 **SCHOOL RESOURCE AND COMMUNITY POLICING OFFICER, AS CORRECTED**
26 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANN**

27 ON THE QUESTION

28
29
30 Officer Adam Kushmerek stated he has been in Hollis since 2016, and in the schools since August. There will
31 be a few community policing aspects he will eventually be tackling, but up until now it has been full days
32 between HUES and HPS.

33
34 He has made one round (half hour) in every classroom thus far. Going forward, his intent is to spend about half
35 an hour to 45 minutes in every classroom/month with diverse topics of discussion, e.g., safety tips.

36
37 Asked if he is seeing any particular challenges besides carpool, he remarked a personal challenge for him is
38 being in a school setting versus a patrol setting. Being in a classroom having all of those eyes on you as a
39 teacher has been a big adjustment. Staff, faculty, and students have been very welcoming.

40
41 Chairman Fareed questioned the professional development required of the SRO. Officer Kushmerek spoke of
42 the basic SRO course he attended (40-hour). There is an advanced SRO course he will be attending in the
43 coming months. The DARE Officer School is an 80-hour course he will be attending the first week of
44 November. As a Police Officer he is required to do X amount of hours/year for that certification as well.
45 Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug noted the MOU is approved once by the Board and signed annually.
46 Should there be major changes from year to year, it would come back before the Board.

47
48 Vice Chairman Kellner noted there remain references within the MOU to the Hollis-Brookline High School;
49 Section M5. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated the correction would be made.

1
2 Chairman Fareed commented it is her hope that the SRO will not only fulfill the requirements of the MOU, but
3 that he has an opportunity to participate in the kind of professional development that is being done with suicide
4 prevention. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated that is mandatory for everyone.

5
6 Chairman Fareed spoke of the number of students and adults in the buildings having different backgrounds and
7 the importance of sensitivity to how we speak without inadvertently hurting one another. She is hopeful the
8 SROs take the same kind of professional development that our employees do around being thoughtful in how
9 we communicate with our students and community-at-large.

10 **MOTION WITHDRAWN**

11
12 **MOTION BY MEMBER KELLNER TO APPROVE THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**
13 **BETWEEN THE HOLLIS SCHOOL DISTRICT AND HOLLIS POLICE DEPARTMENT FOR THE**
14 **SCHOOL RESOURCE AND COMMUNITY POLICING OFFICER, AS CORRECTED**
15 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANN**

16 **MOTION CARRIED**

17 **5-0-0**

18
19 *The Board returned to the regular order of business.*

- 20
21 • To see what action the Board wishes to take regarding Policy **IGE** – Parental Objections to Specific Course
22 Material
23 *Given its second reading;*

24
25 **MOTION BY MEMBER ARTHUR TO AMEND POLICY IGE – PARENTAL OBJECTIONS TO**
26 **SPECIFIC COURSE MATERIAL BY REPLACING “HIS/HER” WITH “THEIR” AND ACCEPT THE**
27 **SECOND READING, AS AMENDED**
28 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER ROY**

29
30 ON THE QUESTION

31
32 A form developed by the Hollis School District Principals was reviewed at the Leadership Team meeting
33 conducted earlier in the day. As there may be an instance where a parent has an objection to course material in
34 the elementary schools as well as the middle or high schools, it is believed appropriate for there to be a single
35 form utilized across all 6 schools. The form will be reviewed by the principals to determine its applicability to
36 different material.

37
38 The request had been made that there be reference in the language of the policy identifying how/where the form
39 can be obtained. Noted was a typo at the end of the second paragraph.

40 **MOTION CARRIED**

41 **5-0-0**

- To rescind policy GBEC: Drug-Free Workplace Policy, and replace with policy ADB/GBEC: Drug-Free Workplace & Drug-Free Schools

**MOTION BY MEMBER ARTHUR TO RESCIND POLICY GBEC – DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER ROY**

ON THE QUESTION

The policy will be replaced with policy ADB/GBEC: Drug-Free Workplace & Drug-Free Schools.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug spoke of duplicate policies and work done to combine them. As part of that effort, this policy should have been rescinded. The audit that was conducted mentioned policy GBEC as an outdated policy. It was simply never rescinded when the new policy was adopted.

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY MEMBER MANN TO ADJOURN

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER ROY

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

The October 6, 2021, meeting of the Hollis School Board adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Date _____ Signed _____