

**HOLLIS BROOKLINE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICT
PUBLIC HEARING
FEBRUARY 11, 2021
MEETING MINUTES**

A Public Hearing was conducted by the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District on Thursday, February 11, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. for Brookline voters.

Holly Deurloo Babcock, Chairman, presided:

Members of the School Board Present: Tom Solon, Vice Chairman
Kate Stoll, Secretary
Elizabeth Brown
Krista Whalen
Beth Janine Williams

Members of the School Board Absent: Cindy VanCoughnett

Also in Attendance: Andrew Corey, Superintendent
Gina Bergskaug, Asst. Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction
Tim Girzone, Principal, Hollis Brookline Middle School

Due to the COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis, and in accordance with Governor Sununu's [Emergency Order #12](#) pursuant to [Executive Order 2020-04](#), this meeting is permitted to be conducted electronically.

As stated on the notice, the hearing was conducted electronically via [Zoom](#) (Meeting ID: 879 5268 8167 / Passcode: 522700).

Each member of the School Board participating was asked to state, for the record, where they were, why their attendance in person was not reasonably practical, who, if anyone, was with them, and whether or not they were able to hear the proceedings.

Holly Deurloo Babcock

Stated she was participating electronically from home, attendance in person was not reasonably practical due to COVID-19, she was alone in the room she was in, and could hear the proceedings.

Krista Whalen

Stated she was participating electronically from home, attendance in person was not reasonably practical due to COVID-19, she was alone in the room she was in, and could hear the proceedings.

Tom Solon

Stated he was participating electronically from home, attendance in person was not reasonably practical due to COVID-19, he was alone in the room he was in, and could hear the proceedings.

Beth Janine Williams

Stated she was participating electronically from work, attendance in person was not reasonably practical due to her location, she was alone in the room she was in, and could hear the proceedings.

Kate Stoll

Stated she was participating electronically from home, attendance in person was not reasonably practical due to COVID-19, she was alone in the room she was in, and could hear the proceedings.

Elizabeth Brown

Stated she was participating electronically from home, attendance in person was not reasonably practical due to COVID-19, she was alone in the room she was in, and could hear the proceedings.

**HOLLIS BROOKLINE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICT
PUBLIC HEARINGS
PETITION WARRANT ARTICLES**

Chairman Deurloo Babcock explained the purpose of the Public Hearing was to obtain public input on the posted Petition Warrant Articles, and went over the rules to be observed during the Zoom meeting.

On February 2, 2021, the Board held a joint meeting with the Hollis Brookline School District Budget Committee during which the articles submitted by the School Board and Budget Committee as well as one petition warrant article were reviewed. Tonight's hearing is the second on four petition warrant articles that were submitted later in the process, and were not able to be heard on February 2nd.

Petition Warrant Article 1:

“Shall we adopt the provisions of RSA 32:5-b, and implement a tax cap whereby the governing body (or budget committee) shall not submit a recommended budget that increases the amount to be raised by local taxes, based on the prior fiscal year's actual amount of local taxes raised, by more than 4%.”

Chairman Deurloo Babcock opened the floor for public comment at 6:39 p.m.

Eric Pauer, 12 Westview Road, Brookline

Noted the vote would be a ballot vote for one hour that would require a 60% or 3/5 majority to pass. He referenced NH RSA [32:5-b](#) and the number of towns and cities that have adopted a tax cap.

A long-term view of the Hollis Brookline Cooperative (COOP) School District indicates from FY05 to FY22 (17 years), spending has been up over 79%. At the same time, student population has decreased 6%. Cost per pupil has gone up from about \$11,300 to approximately \$21,500. That equates to a student spending that is up 82% during those 17 years. For comparison, inflation from CPI-U is up 37% or about 1.8% annually. COOP spending is increasing at more than double the rate of inflation.

The COOP spending is on an unsustainable trajectory. We have decreasing population and rapidly increasing spending. What is more alarming this year is that we will see large tax rate increases for the COOP. There will be a tax increase of 15.5% for Hollis and 15.9% for Brookline.

Displayed was a bar graph showing the student population and the operating budget for the COOP. In the last three years inflation has been 4% and student population has been down 4%, but our budget has been up over 13.3%. We have a decreasing population in the COOP, which is a concern. This budget needs a tax cap as it cannot continue to increase at the rate it has been.

He requested residents in Hollis and Brookline support this 4% tax cap as a guardrail for spending. It provides a reasonable and sustainable spending metric for the COOP.

Peter Walker, 57 Pepperell Road, Brookline

Supports the article believing it brings needed balance to expenses in the two towns. This will contribute, over the long-term, to middle class families being able to remain in the communities.

Katharine Kinnane, 268 South Merrimack Road, Hollis

Opposes the article. This is not a solution to our problem. The downshifting of the taxes that is going on in the State is the root of the problem. She is tired of this coming up every year.

Douglas Davidson, 85 Rideout Road, Hollis

Supports the article. The rate of growth for the budget is sometimes going up 2-3 times the rate of inflation. If you use the Rule of 72 or consider a compound interest, it is unsustainable as a long-term budget strategy. That is a concern. We have had basically flat or slightly downward growth in the COOP, yet the line between the growth of the budget is diverging more and more each year.

The public comment period was closed at 6:47 p.m.

Petition Warrant Article 2

“Shall we adopt the provisions of RSA 40:13 (known as SB 2) to allow official ballot voting on all issues before the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District on the second Tuesday of March?”

Chairman Deurloo Babcock opened the floor for public comment at 6:48 p.m.

Eric Pauer, 12 Westview Road, Brookline

SB2 is a way to conduct our school district meeting in two sessions. It consists of a deliberative session and a ballot voting session. The deliberative session is the same format as our current meeting; open to all voters with debate, discussion, amendments, and motions. The purpose of the deliberative session is to finalize the warrant articles for the second session (ballot voting). You finalize the warrant articles in the deliberative session and then go to the ballot voting session (held on Town election day). The voting can be done anytime; polls are open 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. or you can vote by absentee ballot. It is also a private ballot vote. That is possible at a traditional meeting; however, slows the meeting.

You will have a choice on the ballot of the operating budget or the default budget (computed by Statute). The proposed operating budget, depending on outcome of deliberative session, can be higher or lower than the default budget.

Advantages of SB2 include increased voter participation. There are two opportunities to participate; deliberative session and ballot voting session. Voters have 30 days after the deliberative session to conduct fact checking, etc. There is also the privacy of ballot voting, the flexibility to vote any time on election day, and the ability for absentee voting. You don't have to remain at a town meeting that goes to midnight or later.

The disadvantages of SB2 are that you have to communicate the warrant articles to the voters before and after the deliberative session. You cannot table articles. Another difference that some may see as a disadvantage and others as an advantage; you can't reconsider articles multiples times. You get one vote at it at the balloting session and it is either passed or defeated.

We have had meetings that have been one session, two sessions, and even five sessions (2018). It is difficult for voters to commit to go to these meetings versus doing a deliberative session and a ballot voting session. Last year we had two sessions; one for apportionment only and then drive-thru voting in June.

Brookline has had SB2 since 2017 and has had similar turnout at the deliberative session as was the case when it was traditional meetings. Dramatically more have voted during the balloting session; nearly 1,000 voters.

It provides a longer and more informed discussion on all warrant articles and ensures privacy and ability to vote for all voters. Increased voter participation leads to more responsible fiscal spending and property taxes and better outcomes that are in the best interest of the community.

Like the tax cap, it requires a 60% majority to pass.

Peter Walker, 57 Pepperell Road, Brookline

Is supportive of the article commenting it is 20⁺ years overdue. The merits are real. It would be advantageous to move to this system. It would broaden participation, and would be a benefit to both communities, which have grown immensely over a relatively short period.

Douglas Davidson, 85 Rideout Road, Hollis

Supports the article. There are over 70 towns in the State that currently have it in place. Only 2 towns since '94 have reversed it (smaller towns). Those that are really disenfranchised are the homebound, those who travel, and caregivers. They really haven't had a voice. Seventy percent of the population of New Hampshire (not counting cities as they don't have SB2) actually operate under SB2 currently. It is a proven methodology. One of the myths about it is that it is harder to get out of than it is to get into. That is not true. The requirement to enter an SB2 form of meeting is the same as that required to withdraw. Few towns have ever withdrawn.

Katharine Kinnane, 268 South Merrimack Road, Hollis

Is opposed to the article, which is one that has been brought forward before. She finds it ridiculous that we continue to go through this process. SB2 may be successful in towns without COOPs, but it is definitely not successful in those that have COOPs. It makes it easier for the insurgents of people to get away with letting information slip by and effecting informed voting.

Joseph Garruba, 28 Winchester Drive, Hollis

Opposes the article. Conventional town meetings allow real time amendment of articles based on the results of the meeting. This allows townspeople to come up with compromise solutions that serve the best interests of the town. In SB2 towns, voters are forced to make decisions based on limited information promoted to them by partisan actors. Consider that in SB2 towns many voters may make decisions without the benefit of hearing a presentation or even getting both sides of an issue.

A vote for SB2 is a vote to eliminate the ability of residents to speak directly to the voters of the town. Town meeting should be a forum for free speech and free exchange of ideas. That is the only way to effectively evaluate proposals and make good decisions. He recommended the Board not support the article.

David Werner, 148 Ridge Road, Hollis

Is the Secretary of the Hollis Seniors. He is unsure how the seniors will be able to attend these Town meetings given the COVID environment. They are quite concerned. He believes it may be in the best interest of the seniors to have the opportunity to vote, and it may be that SB2 is the way to go. He is concerned we will be dealing with COVID for a long time, and that is the 800 pound gorilla that we should all think about. If not, he would ask the Board to find some way to allow seniors to participate and vote. He does not believe the current system will allow that to happen.

Douglas Davidson, 85 Rideout Road, Hollis

It is a falsity that several COOPs haven't adopted SB2. Several have.

The public comment period was closed at 7:01 p.m.

Petition Warrant Article 3

“To see if the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District will vote to amend the Articles of Agreement of the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District by deleting Article 3 as currently written and substituting a new Article 3 as follows:

Article 3: The Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District shall be responsible for grades nine (9) through twelve (12).”

Chairman Deurloo Babcock opened the floor for public comment at 7:02 p.m.

Eric Pauer, 12 Westview Road, Brookline

Presented on behalf of the citizens who put forth the article to realign the Hollis Brookline Cooperative (COOP) School District to grades 9-12.

The proposal would change Article 3 of the Articles of Agreement (AoA). The AoA is the constitution of the COOP. Article 3 speaks about the grades that are in the COOP; instead of being grades 7-12, it would be 9-12.

The current organization of the SAU is a K-6 Hollis School District, K-6 Brookline School District, and the COOP with grades 7 and 8 at the Hollis Brookline Middle School (HBMS) and 9-12 at the Hollis Brookline High School (HBHS). The proposed change would make the Hollis and Brookline school districts K-8 and the COOP School District 9-12.

Why consider re-alignment; the current HBMS facility is very aged and not capable of being expanded, student population growth is expected (coming up in elementary schools according to NESDEC projections), financial conditions of historically low bond rates, revised building aid proposed by the legislature, and process within the AoA to address this.

The current HBMS building was constructed in 1953 and has gone through several additions/renovations. There have been 3 major additions to the 68-year-old building, and further expansion would be expensive/impractical.

Student population projections show Brookline will see a 51% increase in grades 7-8 by FY29 and Hollis a 41% increase in grades K-6 by FY29.

A slide was shown identifying possible usage of the HBMS should Brookline students move elsewhere; could build a brand new middle school or expand CSDA. Grades 9-12 would remain in the HBHS.

Bond rates are at historic lows and are very favorable for renovation/new construction. Two House Bills (HB1214/HB594) would revive school building aid.

Article 15 in the AoA calls out how the process would work should this article pass; requires a grade reduction committee to be formed, outlines the duties of the committee, and speaks to the final vote by the Legislative Body. Mr. Pauer requested voters support realignment of the COOP. It is a proactive approach for our children.

Katharine Kinnane, 268 South Merrimack Road, Hollis

Opposes the article believing it to be the wrong direction for the district. Renovation costs for the HBMS in addition to shifting of all grades would be far more costly than continuing with the existing COOP structure.

Lorenzo Occhialini, 59 Averill Road, Brookline

Opposes the article. Remembers a vote last year on whether to split up the COOP district. This seems like another way of ultimately having some idea of that coming to fruition. He feels having the students of the two towns together in the COOP district around 7th grade is good for the socialization, and has the sense it is unnecessary to make a change. What we have now is working, and improving on that is a much better idea than taking up this herculean project to try and renovate and/or build new sites.

Peter Walker, 57 Pepperell Road, Brookline

Supports exploring this opportunity. We are growing these two communities. All assets don't have to be in Hollis. There are changes happening in Brookline, and we are going to have to re-balance where people are educated as that growth occurs. He does not think that can be avoided.

Melanie Levesque, 2 McDaniels Drive, Brookline

Is opposed to the article. Does not see the true benefit. Existing economies of scale would be lost. We are currently able to offer more broad educational opportunities for our students, which would no longer be the case. We will continue to be required to pay teachers and paraprofessionals, the cost of buses, and building costs. Hollis and Brookline are two communities that benefit from the COOP. They benefit cost wise, in education, and the rich experience our students receive.

Students have the opportunities in middle school to reinvent themselves, make new friends, increased opportunities for accelerated programs, etc. Changing the structure would be a disservice to our students.

Jennifer Morrissey, 25 Laurel Crest Drive, Brookline

Spoke of having moved to Brookline from Pepperell, for the school system. Over the years, has seen multiple articles concerning combining the two school systems or splitting up the COOP. Also seen are the benefits for the students, teachers, and the system in being able to realize the economies of scale, to have the children meet new children, have new experiences, and be able to leverage all of the resources available to them. We have spent much too much time and energy on investigating where we should split them up. We need to stop doing this, and instead figure out how to improve upon what we already have.

Douglas Davidson, 85 Rideout Road, Hollis

Is generally against breaking up the COOP, and has been for years. However, what is being suggested is a discovery process. As we determined last night, there are many off-ramps if, through that discovery, we find that this isn't right for the COOP or either of the towns. The fact is that the build-out plan from the Nashua Regional Planning Commission shows a much greater potential for building and population in Brookline. That is basically just a fact.

An effort like this takes several years to complete and includes a good deal of public input. He believes it a worthwhile exercise. Ultimately, he would not like to see the COOP broken up, but again there are many available off-ramps to exit this strategy, even if the warrant passes. He wished to speak from a discovery standpoint that this is a worthwhile process that should be supported.

Joseph Garruba, 28 Winchester Drive, Hollis

Supports the article; specifically because we need to provide building space and resources. By constraining ourselves to the specific scenario that we have now for 7th and 8th grades, even as we know that the population is growing (specifically in Brookline), it seems if you can't react to the changes that the world is presenting, you will lose the advantages that the COOP presents. Expanding by moving 7th and 8th grade to Brookline and breaking up that portion of it does not end the COOP, it just provides better educational opportunities closer to the locations where the students are.

Tiffany Testa, 101 Mooar Hill Road, Hollis

We have spent a lot of time developing a really strong K-12 curriculum that meets the developmental needs of our students. The idea of breaking up the middle school only to have them come back to the high school makes absolutely no sense in terms of learning and development needs of the 7th and 8th grade students.

We can go into a discovery, but she can think of so many better things for the communities and Board to spend their energy on and for the taxpayers to spend their money on knowing that it really doesn't make good sense educationally. These kids are redefining themselves. All of our schools are strong, but the middle school is unbelievable; the programming, structure, leadership, teachers, etc. If we need more space then we will figure out how to make more space for all of us.

Bettielue Hill, 47 Mountain Road, Brookline

Requested clarification on the source of the data and growth projections. Chairman Deurloo Babcock noted the article/presentation was not prepared by the School Board, but the presenter. The projections she believes were used were NESDEC projections, which are also used by the school district, although the district tends to only focus on a few years out. There were some projections there that go beyond what the district is comfortable with.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated agreement, the district looks out five years at the maximum for validity because factors change so quickly. The report is provided each year, and it can be seen that projections change greatly once you go out five years. She believes the data source was reported as NESDEC; however, she did not fact check the information. NESDEC values are posted on the SAU website.

Elizabeth Brown, 10 Williams Way, Hollis

Has heard there is a general sense of community fatigue for anything that appears to be a step in the direction of dividing the COOP. Beyond that, she is hearing a lot of fatigue because we are in the middle of a pandemic. When she hears the justification for adopting a citizen's petition is that 20 years ahead of us we might have outgrown the school, we want to go through this discovery phase, which has lots of off-ramps, we just need to look into the data, those are all things that could be done and may be done at some future time. During the middle of a pandemic when she believes us to be one of the few schools (if not the only one) to have our kids in the building 5 days a week, this isn't the time to look at this.

If there is a consideration for this maybe 5 years from now; but in the middle of a pandemic is not the time to start having broad-based discovery discussions about breaking up the COOP, which is really the next step.

Kelly Zakar, 5 Cider Mill Road, Brookline

Commented you can pull up her statements from March 11, 2020 as the last meeting when this came up as a petition warrant article. She has been through this process with New Boston and Goffstown prior to moving to Brookline in 2014. It is a very costly process and involves a lot of meetings, lawyers, and consultants. She echoed the comments of both Ms. Brown and Ms. Morrissey. She moved to the district when her son was entering 7th grade at HBMS. She has had the opportunity to have children in both Brookline elementary schools, the HBMS and HBHS.

She has said to anyone who will listen, the HBMS is the crown jewel of our district. It is a phenomenal educational environment with phenomenal teachers, special education professionals, etc. We really do care about our children and those types of resources. When you look at the number of children who are on 504s or IEPs, the cost would be magnified by splitting the districts. She opposes the article.

Jennifer Morrissey, 25 Laurel Crest Drive, Brookline

Her daughter, although doing remote learning, is benefitting a great deal from the opportunity to have access to an amazing cohort of teachers, counselors, students. She would not trade it for anything in the world. She wants her second child to have that same set of opportunities.

The public comment period was closed at 7:25 p.m.

Petition Warrant Article 4

“Shall SAU 41 and the Hollis Brookline Cooperative Schools hereby affirm our general support for each student’s growth and enrichment, in support thereof, We, the Legislative Body, hereby state the following as a matter of general policy:

- (a) The family unit is ideally at the core of each individual’s social, educational, intellectual, and emotional well being,
- (b) Our schools are a critical element that shall foster an environment where our goal is that all students are enabled to thrive and positively achieve their potential and develop the content of their character accordingly,
- (c) It shall be the primary goal of all teachers and administrators to support these efforts,
- (d) Any divisive policy that fosters prejudicial discrimination, segregation, stereotyping, intimidation, censorship, harassment or retribution based on race or sex is, by its nature, a threat to our social fabric, morally wrong and generally unlawful,
- (e) Further, educational techniques that hinder or prevent: fairness, impartiality, equality of opportunity OR, conversely, support outcomes of “equity redesign”, “equity based outcomes”, “redistribution”, “retribution”, “unlearning” or “Critical Race Theory” are, by their nature, detrimentally counterproductive to healthy education and the unifying ideals of our greater American Society,
- (f) Any parties so wronged may seek court relief under applicable federal and state laws, through and with RSA 354-A (Anti-Discrimination), RSA 91-A, (The Right to Know), et al., noting the enforcement and penalty provisions provided therein.

Therefore,

WE, the Legislative Body of SAU 41 and the Hollis Brookline Cooperative Schools, with our vote, hereby affirm that this Article be published and made an integral policy of our School Administrative Unit and Cooperative School District.”

Chairman Deurloo Babcock opened the floor for public comment at 7:27 p.m.

Douglas Davidson, 85 Rideout Road, Hollis

This is an anti-discrimination petition for all people in contrast to Critical Race Theory (CRT), and what the efforts are of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee.

If the 1960s meant anything to us it was about people being judged by the content of their character. The efforts of DEI and CRT flies in the face of that great lesson. How far have we come? He suggested if asking Clarence Thomas, Dr. Ben Carson, Morgan Freeman, and others, they would say we have come a long way.

The big issue is equity versus equality, outcome versus opportunity. Equity provides for a dumbing down not unlike Common Core. It takes from one group and gives to another. It is looking at outcome and all outcomes being equal. It is not about and is really the opposite of equal opportunity. What you will often hear is talk

about building equity, well that is CRT. That is taking from one group and giving to another and looking for a common outcome based on race.

That is one of the problems and challenges we have here. With CRT and the efforts of the DEI Committee you are looking at everything through a prism of racism. It is using identity politics to weaken public bonds and to separate and pit one against the other in a community and to start making these norms. It is not education or discovery as in a sarcastic method it is about indoctrination.

It is a classic divide and conquer strategy, in most cases demonizing white people or people that are named being in a position of power. The question he has to ask is where the years of systemic racism at HB are. If this has been happening, all of us, particularly Administrators, teachers, and those who have been on school boards, should be accountable. The methods that the DEI and CRT groups use are not unlike the methodologies we have seen from the Red Guards, Alinsky, and BLM, pitting one group against the other.

He provided highlights from a note received from a parent who was concerned about their daughter. Again, using divisive things that white people are bad, they created racism, they brought slavery to America; all falsehoods.

With all of the identity politics and looking at everything through a prism of racism, does this nurture and teach and foster self-confidence in our students, does it bring us together, does it foster confidence in community? Would this distraction and chasing windmill strategy improve our math and reading scores? The current situation in the district shows that 32% are not proficient in math and 14% are not proficient in reading at grade level.

He asked voters to vote against discrimination in supporting this article. You are either for discrimination or against it. We all need to choose.

Diane Marsolini, 27 Laurel Crest Drive, Brookline

Is opposed to the article. The article appears to be written in order to prevent anti-discrimination activity. Section B refers to divisive policy. That is impossible to interpret in any real meaningful way. It also references discrimination only in terms of race or sex. By law, schools are obligated to address discrimination on the basis of age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, color, marital status, familial status, disability, religion, national origin or any other classes protected under RSA 354-A.

The article includes censorship of a divisive policy and then moves to Section E, which states how it will censor the schools in their educational techniques. Section E references, several times, educational theories. Broad, undefined terms and generalizations are being used with the intention of preventing healthy discussion. Stopping the conversation is the worst thing that can happen. The terminology unifying ideals of our greater American society suggests there is a predefined ideal of American society based on the petitioners' opinions.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion work requires difficult conversations, and care should be taken of how best to initiate these discussions in our schools. She noted the presenter made a point about equity being outcome. The DEI Committee has been very careful with the definition of equity. It is not being defined as equity of outcome.

The DEI Committee is currently working towards hearing all of these viewpoints. A DEI resolution has been brought to the school boards on multiple occasions since last summer. She requested the Board review the most up-to-date version of the DEI resolution, and adopt it as a positive step to assist students and teachers, and to reject this article.

Kelle Zakar, 5 Cider Mill Road, Brookline

Is adamantly opposed to the article, and offended that someone would try to characterize her as being for discrimination if against this article. She has been a public witness to many of the DEI Committee meetings, and has found them to be very fruitful discussions among people having differing viewpoints, life experiences, and political ideology. She does not believe issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion are matters that are left or right, liberal or conservative, Democrat or Republican. They are matters of human rights and experiences.

She takes note with the fact that the presenter states that equity dumbs down our curriculum similar to the Common Core. Equity raises the value of our education and the rigors of it as we would be hopefully engaging our students in more diverse text and more stringent curriculum for the community to explore materials that they previously may not have been exposed to. Equity and inclusion ensures that everyone's history is taught and discussed, and comparative points of view are able to be heard and analyzed so that students actually do become better learners, and learn to ask questions in a Socratic method.

Peter Walker, 57 Pepperell Road, Brookline

Supports the article believing that for far too long our country has been divided against itself rather than strengthening our national unity based on shared values and affirming our commonalities of interest; our foundational principles of liberty and justice for all.

We focus solely on differences. We cannot construct a positive learning environment based on identity politics. This is a time for a reconciliation. He believes the article embraces that goal.

Lorenzo Occhialini, 59 Averill Road, Brookline

As a student who recently graduated HB (class of 2020), he opposes the article. A lot of the curriculum at HB is very open about these discussions about race such as in the AP classes like AP U.S. History. That class helped him open his eyes to a lot of these things, and inspired him and others to come together as a community to conduct the HB Black Lives Matter rally. It was a really beautiful way of seeing the community come together and have an open and honest discussion about race. That would never happen again if this were implemented into our educational system. Due to a lot of the muddy language in the article, the worst case scenario would be that we stop having these hard discussions altogether.

Jennifer Morrissey, 25 Laurel Crest Drive, Brookline

Is opposed to the article. The language is unclear and in some ways detrimental to so many things. The presentation, at its beginning, was filled with inaccuracies and inflammatory concepts that just aren't representative of the people who really care about having inclusive and truly representational approaches to how we treat the people in our communities and our schools.

As a middle-aged white lady, she has seen her friends and neighbors, people she really cares about, exposed and subjected to racist discriminatory actions and comments in this community, and it is not okay. If we don't give the kids in our communities an accurate opportunity to understand the realities of both history and the current state, we are doing them a serious disservice.

Joseph Garruba, 28 Winchester Drive, Hollis

Wished to differentiate between CRT and the petition. The intent here is not to prevent discussions or somehow stifle speech; the concept is to look very specifically at CRT. It is not possible to capture this in a two-minute speech. He asked all who oppose the article to visit the SAU website, under the administration section and

under Superintendent, you will find DEI. There is a link called CRT info. and definitions. It was created by the DEI Committee. It has tons of information about the problems that are at the root of this process, which is based on CRT.

Colleen Micavich, 29 Iron Works Road, Brookline

Spoke of having sent the Board a communication requesting the article not be put forward. In researching the law, she can see that puts the Board in a difficult position. She questioned what other remedies are available for this petition, which is truly offensive. She requested the Board ask of legal counsel the following: 1) are there portions of this proposed article that are not legally enforceable and 2) should the Board consider getting a ruling from the Superior Court on this. It is an offensive petition based on some of where it comes from, it is hugely divisive, and although she feels bad that the district has to waste resources on this, she believes allowing it to move forward could set a very bad precedent.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock stated the Board's understanding that there is not anything in this that is binding were it to pass.

Sue Homola, 15 Mendelssohn Drive, Hollis

At last night's discussion, there was a lot of mention of the DEI Committee. The DEI Committee is comprised of a lot of thoughtful people who have dedicated a lot of time to the topic of student inclusion, and should be applauded for that. For those who say the DEI initiative has nothing to do with CRT, she would remind them the whole reason the DEI Committee exists is because a handful of people quietly proposed the school district hire a consultant (at a cost of \$150,000) to evaluate the school's curriculum policies for instances of systematic racism. Critical Race Theory is founded upon the belief that American institution laws in history are inherently racist. To say that hiring a paid consultant to evaluate our school policies and our curriculum for systematic racism has nothing to do with opening of the door to CRT is either naïve or is intentionally deceptive. The impetus for this petition is one way to say that the inflammatory rhetoric of CRT should not be allowed to take root in Hollis schools.

One of the more concerning issues for her has been how the people who signed the petition have been intimidated, maligned, and name shamed on community social media pages over this past week. They have been called racist and there have been many posts telling others who they can contact on the school board to attain a list of the petition signers so that their names could be posted on Facebook. Many people who support this petition will not speak up now because of fear of retribution, which is unacceptable.

It is ironic that the very same people who have spouted tolerance and inclusion cannot discuss an opposing idea without intimidating others. We do need to have an honest and fair discussion about CRT and how it is being introduced in the Hollis Brookline schools, but regardless of what happens with this petition, parents are starting to take notice of what is being taught to their children. They really do deserve to have this important discussion in an open, fair, and mature way.

Kacie Petrin Ellis, 7 Smith Road, Brookline

Strongly opposes the article. It is deliberately misleading and poses several concerning statements. At first glance, it may seem harmless and some might believe the intent is good. However, upon further review, its devious nature becomes obvious to anyone who has been paying attention to the hard work being done by the DEI Committee. This article is a crafty distraction in a time when our focus is needed on making sure the COOP provides the most positive and productive learning environment for all of our students.

Melanie Levesque, 2 McDaniels Drive, Brookline

Is opposed to the article. It usurps the work of the DEI Committee. Any such work should be done collaboratively with the school boards as the DEI Committee is doing. We should not forget who we are doing this for; our children. They are our future. As much as we have a phenomenal school system, we are not perfect and can be better. We have come a long way, but we still have a way to go. She urged the citizenry to vote down this article.

Eric Broadhurst, 33 Pepperell Road, Brookline

Thanked the district and its employees for what is a great school system. He spoke of how the students shine. Their attitude towards school is positive, their work ethic is unparalleled. They embrace education and more importantly our students look past zip codes, skin color, pronouns, and support each other in a very positive way. The students get their values from being taught at home. Most of the parents in this community are founded in Judeo-Christian cultures and backgrounds and we pass that on at the dinner table. That is what culture should be; taught at home by family. The government has no business trying to seize the culture and values of our children. That is the parents' responsibility. That is how it works.

The main focus of CRT is very clear; to tell everyone that white people are predominantly racist by nature and that the system is rigged in favor of white people. That is unproven and false. That should not be taught in school.

Caitie Parikh, 8 Petersen Road, Brookline

Is opposed to the article. She is on the DEI Committee and views the article as being reactionary to the national conversation that is occurring about race, and it plays to fears about CRT that are being propagated in the media. It is full of a lot of hot button terms that are meant to inflame people. What we really need to be having are balanced conversations about these topics, which is what the Committee has been trying to do. The DEI Committee is a broadly diverse group that has been having these conversations to reflect Hollis and Brookline accurately. We are not naïve or deceptive, there is no nefarious agenda. It is just a group of people working to have these discussions respectfully and to come up with a resolution for the school board to adopt to improve the school for all kids. She encouraged everyone to read the current version of the resolution. For them, equity in education means that all kids have the resources that they need to access their education. No one is talking about equity as being outcome related.

Marie Ramas, 9 Colburn Lane, Hollis

Is opposed to the article. The DEI Advisory Committee was formed by the district in order to create a picture of the various perspectives of our communities. It has provided information about CRT in order to have a better understanding of what these terms mean, our committee understands that words have very different meanings, and definitions are important.

She wholeheartedly concurs that no one should be judged by their race, color, ethnicity, sex, or other characterizations as is protected by Federal and State law. However, those very differences should not be divisive, they should be celebrated. That is exactly what the Hollis Brookline community is, a place where we should celebrate all of these differences and provide an avenue for our students to be able to talk about these differences in a positive and productive way. She is hopeful the committee has shown that to the community.

Another concern for her is that of cancelling out certain voices and censoring certain ideas. Both students and teachers are entitled to their First Amendment rights. These include the diverse teachings and thoughts and opinions of varying members. This is not about teaching ideologies; this is about helping our kids have difficult conversations.

She pointed out the concept of divisiveness is a very vague and opaque word that can be misconstrued in differing circumstances.

Jennifer Morrissey, 25 Laurel Crest Drive, Brookline

As a community we are 95% white. Our ability collectively to understand and appreciate the challenges that are faced by people who aren't us, is something we really need to be considering. We need to be looking at our friends and neighbors who don't fit that mold and trying to understand what their challenges are. What are other people facing, how do we help them to address those challenges, and how do we start using empathy as the lens we use rather than articles and laws?

Katharine Kinnane, 268 South Merrimack Road, Hollis

Is opposed to the article that is clearly racist and designed to be an extravagant exaggeration employed for rhetorical affect.

Douglas Davidson, 85 Rideout Road, Hollis

A lot of the concerns of those who signed the petition could be quelled if the DEI Committee came out and specifically said, and put in writing, that they are against CRT, and that is not their mission. They have been saying that. Why don't they put it in writing? Equity has a meaning. You can't redefine a word as it is written in the dictionary. They keep saying equity means equal opportunity, but it does not. Why don't they just say we support equal opportunity so that we know that it is not outcome driven but is equal opportunity driven. Equity does not mean equal opportunity, and don't say it does.

There is no provision or desire, as one of those who helped write the petition, for any type of censorship or suppression of free speech in any way. The wording, as it is written, is that they don't want to have foregone conclusions or desired outcomes before we have the discussion. Clearly the fact that this petition has been put out there and resulted in the amount of participation we have gotten from the community, has been pretty impressive. Having that discussion, whether we agree or disagree, is a good thing. That should again speak to the fact that he is all about free speech and getting these sorts of topics aired honestly.

Brandie Langfield, 11 Black Oak Drive, Hollis

Is opposed to the article. She finds it appalling to see this out in the community.

David Werner, 148 Ridge Road, Hollis

Is on the DEI Committee. Members are all good people who speak from their hearts. This is not in any way, shape, or form an issue that he even thinks has been raised with the Committee. There is a difference between dealing with racism and teaching an honest and true history of the United States in dealing with the horrors and sins of slavery and the other discriminations we have dealt with. Critical Race Theory is a political weapon designed to undermine and destroy the United States government. They want to replace the United States Constitution because they call it a white supremacist document. They want to undermine Christianity because it is a white supremacist religion. He asked those in opposition to consider researching what CRT teaches. If you do that you are free to say you support it, but he does not hear people tonight reflecting upon what is actually being taught by CRT. He pleaded with residents to research it and get to know what it says. It is not what you think it is.

Tiffany Testa, 101 Mooar Hill Road, Hollis

She heard a lot about identity politics and about race. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in education is not at all just about race. It is about meeting the individual needs of every single student so that they may have equal opportunity to education. It is about social and emotional learning. It is not even so much about curriculum though that is a part of it. It is not necessarily all about what you can teach, it is how you teach. It is about practice. There is a hugely heightened obsession about CRT, anti-racism, and all of these buzz words that just get everybody going. The DEI Committee is talking about DEI. It is wrong to say that equity is about equal outcomes. That is the fear. The fear comes from the idea that we might take from one and reassert it to another. That is just wrong. Equity in education; as educators we know that it means meeting the needs of every single student whatever they are.

This article is divisive, and she believes to be the result of the authors not liking what was going on in the DEI work, which was a collaborative effort. This is not a collaborative effort it was written by a small group in opposition to the DEI work.

The public comment period was closed at 8:05 p.m.

The Public Hearing was declared closed at 8:05 p.m.

Date _____

Signed _____