

**HOLLIS SCHOOL BOARD
SEPTEMBER 1, 2020
MEETING MINUTES**

A meeting of the Hollis School Board was conducted on Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. at the Hollis Upper Elementary School.

Robert Mann, Chairman, presided:

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

Members of the Board Absent:

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

As Member Kellner was participating electronically, in accordance with the Right to Know Law, Chairman Mann requested she state, for the record; where she was, why her attendance in person was not reasonably practical, who, if anyone, was with her, and whether or not she was able to hear the proceedings.

Member Kellner stated she was out of town, her attendance in person was not reasonably practical due to her location, she was alone, and could hear the proceedings.

The Board was reminded all votes would be taken by Roll Call.

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS

A request was made to amend the agenda to include a discussion of class size for remote classes.

There being no objection, the agenda was amended as requested.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Hollis School Board [August 19, 2020](#)

The following amendments were offered:

Page 7, Line 35; replace “any” with “every”
Page 12, Line 14; replace “he” with “Superintendent Corey”

**MOTION BY MEMBER ARTHUR TO ACCEPT, AS AMENDED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER ROY**

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

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

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Nay:

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MOTION CARRIED

NOMINATIONS/RESIGNATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE

Superintendent Corey spoke of considerable research done around the topic of anti-racism and equity, and the intent to form an advisory committee to the Superintendent. He will reach out to community members and begin with a core group that will work with him. They will expand that into conversations, forums, and discussions across the SAU. The committee would come back to the Board with recommendations. A consultant was looked into. The cost of the initial data gathering would be approximately \$24,000. To go through a year with a consultant could be at a cost in excess of \$100,000.

The Board will be notified of the names of those who will participate on the advisory committee as well as the tasks/challenges that will be addressed, at its next meeting. Updates will be provided periodically (beginning as early as October).

The SAU has already started incorporating the Choose Love program, which has a good deal around mental health, but has a component that also talks of these elements. Rather than have multiple things occurring, the SAU will look at the Choose Love program and see how we, as a school district, can incorporate specific items to help us move the ball forward in this critical area.

The Administration would work with the 3 school boards within the SAU to move forward to the goals and objectives, and to incorporate those elements into the Strategic Plan so they are not just a one-shot hit for one school year, but more here is what the next 5 years looks like. Then we can look at ways of tracking our own data.

From the COOP School Board perspective, it aligns very nicely as pre-pandemic being discussed was the vision for what a Cavalier should look like when graduating high school; what are the qualities and skillset we want our students to graduate with. To him, this becomes a K-12 piece of that.

Vice Chairman Fareed requested consideration be given to a student component on the advisory committee. Superintendent Corey stated Rick Barnes, Principal, Hollis Brookline High School, is looking for a student at that age level, and he has reached out to a middle school student. Committee work would include conducting public forums to solicit input from the public-at-large.

The Superintendent's advisory committee will have a structure/makeup similar to that which was created to address the re-opening plan. Staff input will be sought in the areas of curriculum.

Vice Chairman Fareed commented the direction being taken does not rule out the possibility of seeking assistance from a consultant for specific circumstances. Superintendent Corey remarked the advisory committee could make such a recommendation, e.g., to administer a technical survey. That would be for a set cost and set time, and the community could determine whether the expense was justified based on whether there was belief the task was critical to the mission.

Asked how committee membership would be recruited, Superintendent Corey spoke of having received email communications from individuals willing to serve. He would be looking to some of those who assisted in the writing of the Resolution and some who were vocal at meetings to gain a diverse representation. There will be a role for those willing to serve in this capacity; if not on the advisory committee in some other capacity.

PUBLIC INPUT

Susan Carlon Giles, 44 Forest View Drive, Hollis

Spoke of the countless hours put in by the Administration and Board, and expressed her gratitude for their making the building as safe for the teachers and students as they possibly could.

DISCUSSION

- Memorandum of Understanding with the Union

Over the past few months, efforts have been underway with union membership to arrive at a Memorandum of Agreement. The resulting document outlines health and safety guidelines incorporated into the re-opening plan, e.g., physical distancing, PPE. Teachers are receiving trainings around those aspects during professional development as we open the year. The document also addresses how teachers will be evaluated, e.g., if in remote learning the types of observation procedures (committee being formed to address that), the expectations for staff and what staff can expect from the Administration. It is a fluid document in the sense that parts are determined based on the actions/recommendations of the CDC and the NH DHHS.

The Administration has been preparing with the nurses who will be the conduit to assist parents with the understanding of symptoms and providing guidance. If a student were to be suspected or confirmed of having COVID, the nurse would reach out to the DHHS. This is something that is done now for other situations such as Whooping Cough. The nurse would work with the DHHS to identify what is going on in the building, and would work with the school and SAU Administration in regard to next steps.

The document addresses how the SAU would handle a situation where a student or teacher needed to be quarantined. Vice Chairman Fareed questioned if families are required to take any action should one of the school nurses make the designation that a student may have COVID. Superintendent Corey responded they do not, it is no different than if the nurse called a parent if we were in a non-COVID world. They would discuss the symptoms of the student and would likely make a recommendation, perhaps to see their pediatrician. The nurse is not diagnosing a student, they are having a conversation with the family.

Vice Chairman Fareed questioned if, within the language of the MOU, the nurses are the individuals who determine a student must be quarantined. Superintendent Corey responded no. The nurse is simply the point person that will start that discussion as they are and have been for many years. The reason they are the point person is because when they call the DHHS, they have the medical background to talk to the nurse there.

Vice Chairman Fareed questioned the protocol if a nurse identifies symptoms and reaches out to the family indicating a potential case of COVID; who makes the call that the student has to go home? Superintendent Corey stated it would be handled no differently than situations in the past. If the nurse feels that the student is ill, the family will be contacted to retrieve the student. There will be a conversation with the parents with regard to the nurse's recommendation for next steps.

Vice Chairman Fareed asked for clarification the MOU doesn't change any of that; doesn't give the nurse different powers or take power from the nurse. Superintendent Corey responded the MOU talks about the nurse being the point person to contact the DHHS because of their level of expertise.

Chairman Mann commented based on the conversations and review of the MOU, he is fairly comfortable it maintains the Board's management rights as part of the regular Collective Bargaining Agreement. He requested additional information relative to the period of time the MOU is in effect. Superintendent Corey stated the document was developed for the 2021-2021 school year. It is to address the health and safety items around COVID-19 and issues that may impact the teaching staff. It was done through Attorney Closson, who has negotiated the Hollis School District contracts for many years. He did an outstanding job working with all of the unions. After the document goes before the COOP School Board Thursday night, it will become a public document and will be posted to the SAU website.

- Registration Data Update

Class sizes have been determined. Kindergarten will have 3 in-person classes and 1 remote section. First grade will have 3 in-person sections and 2 remote sections. Second grade will have 4 in-person sections and 1 remote section (with an instructional assistant). Third grade will have 3 in-person sections and 2 remote sections. Grade 4 will have 3 in-person sections and 1 remote section. Grade 5 will be 4 in-person sections and 1 remote section (instructional assistant). Grade 6 will have 4 in-person sections and 2 remote sections. At this time, the in-person sections are nearly maxed out. All families are being informed, if there is a desire to change, now is not the time. They are being asked to commit to their original request, and go from there. The first natural break is a long weekend in October (9th), which will be used as a date to re-evaluate where we are, e.g., if adjustments need to be made with sections of students who are in-person or remote. That might be an opportunity to make a change to the current registration status.

Vice Chairman Fareed commented what community members need to think about is that the in-person sections are dictated by the physical distancing guidelines established by State and Federal agencies. We only have so much square footage in any given building or classroom, and there is a maximum number of bodies that can be there. Currently we have families who have registered for in-person and those who have registered for remote learning, and this balance is how the Administration has determined the class distributions.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated that to be correct. She noted some parents have made changes to their registration status over the past few weeks, and at this point, we need to hold onto the registrations as they currently are. She noted teacher assignments would go out the following day.

The number of students who are not yet registered is very small. The only question would be with regard to those who have just moved into the community, and not yet registered.

Member Arthur questioned if there is the desire to be made aware of those families who may be considering changing their registration status prior to the October 9th timeframe. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug responded families should communicate their desire to make a change so that the numbers can be tracked, and an educated decision be made as to how to proceed.

Asked, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug responded the District is well within compliance of the in-person class sizes.

Member Arthur questioned, and was informed the social distancing requirements are being maintained. The only time the 6' could not be maintained would be if there were a small group of students working in a pull out setting where it is more of an intimate teaching setting. In such an instance, there would be plexiglass barrier utilized. Asked if class sizes are nearing the point where that would not be able to be maintained, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug responded, at this time, there isn't much in the way of additional space for the in-person sections. There may be the opportunity for an entire remote section to return to the building if there is the desire and ability. There are a lot of factors to be considered such as in-person students wishing to switch to remote. The only approach is to gather as much information as possible each day to try to move forward in a way that makes sense. There are additional classroom spaces that could be utilized if an additional section of in-person needed to be added.

Vice Chairman Fareed commented on a time when spaces such as the gym and cafeteria had to be utilized as classroom space, and questioned if that is an option that would be considered, if enough students and staff wished to return to the building. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug commented the Administration has envisioned every scenario imaginable. She does not envision utilizing the gym or cafeteria for classroom spaces as there are vacant classrooms. She spoke of the many factors that go into consideration of which space to utilize, e.g., during the nicer weather windows will be open, and the availability of windows will be less of an issue with the colder weather, as filters become available (currently on backorder).

With regard to remote learning class sizes, grades 2 and 5 currently have an instructional assistant that will be assigned to them. Those sections are larger than the desire of the Board based on existing policy. That was brought up at the last meeting during discussion of potential staffing needs. The Administration is keeping an eye on this as additional enrollment in remote classes could dictate splitting up section(s). One barrier is the lack of certified teachers nationwide.

Chairman Mann commented the policy was written from a standpoint of in-person class sizes.

Vice Chairman Fareed noted during the last meeting, she stated her concern with regard to the projected remote learning class sizes (well past the educational specification). She questioned the current enrollment numbers. Also discussed at the last meeting was empowering the Administration to hire additional staff if needed and able to. She questioned if there has been any movement in that regard.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug provided approximate numbers of enrollment for remote classes; 16 in kindergarten, sections of 14 in grade 1, 25 in grade 2, which is why there is an instructional assistant assigned to the class in addition to the teacher. There are 2 sections of 14 in grade 3. Grade 4 has 22. Grade 5 has 28, which is above specifications, and why there will be an instructional assistant. Grade 6 has 18 and 19.

Vice Chairman Fareed spoke of students having IEPs and a paraeducator assigned to them, and of in-person classrooms where an IEP paraeducator could happen to spill over to the other students in the sense that it generally helps with the classroom. She questioned if that potential is seen for the remote learning classrooms as well. Assistant Superintendent Thompson responded he does not believe you can count on that because the number of educators in the buildings are tied to services listed in IEPs. There is an occasion where a paraeducator does work with students in regular education, but to make that any type of general rule to support remote learning would not be sustainable.

Asked if the classroom assistants have already been hired or are being sought, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated her understanding they are difficult to find at this time based on hiring across the District, but it is a little bit of a whirlwind because of all of the hiring going on between the schools. She did not have confirmation.

• Class Size for Remote Classes

Chairman Mann spoke of inquiries related to the size of remote classes, and how it relates to what challenges it presents in regard to overall instruction and the experience for the students. He questioned the will of the Board relative to setting limits on those class sizes or guidance as to when enrollment numbers would trigger Board action.

Superintendent Corey remarked if the Board would like to see numbers reduced for remote sections, the Administration would do its best to support that through hiring. They may look at something a little flexible given there are 2 sections that are larger than we may like. Because of the hiring shortage they may be able to seek a single individual who is K-6 certified and could spend the morning in the room with the 2nd grade teacher and the afternoon with the 5th grade teacher. That would provide two certified professionals in the room, which would greatly reduce the numbers. They are not opposed to that. It is believed the instructional paraeducator and the teacher at grade 2 will do an exceptional job. The concern would be if things trended in our favor, as far as when returning to the classroom who would return, e.g., would the new hires be maintained for the entirety of the year.

From a budgetary standpoint, it will not be an easy year regardless. There is the availability of the Contingency Fund as well as the Unreserved Fund Balance (UFB) to address additional costs. Utilizing the UFB would require Budget Committee and Board approval, and would be a last resort. Still unknown are what new costs may be associated with special education. There is a limited Special Education Trust Fund that could assist with that.

Asked if there is some sort of trigger such as an academic outcome or social emotional learning need that would result in the need for action, Superintendent Corey stated he would not recommend a policy. He would potentially recommend the Board consider authorizing the Administration to hire if felt the need was justified. There is nothing wrong with doing an anticipated opening as a means of starting the process. We could start the year and see how things go with the teacher and a paraprofessional and what resumes come in. They could then report back to the Board later this month in regard to progress.

Member Arthur commented on the benefits to remote class sizes that could be achieved through the ability for families to change enrollment status from remote to in-person. It may be that if learning of the larger class sizes associated with remote learning that some would choose to change to in-person. Superintendent Corey responded the first pause is to get all students identified with a teacher. Once that goes out, some families will rethink their enrollment status. The Principals have asked those parents to pause. In the in-person sections the driving force has been around the 6' of social distancing. There are some rooms that could be utilized should in-person enrollments increase. Most parents have made their decision based on their comfort level around COVID-19. There have been only a few that have indicated they may wish to change their status (not for the start of school). That may change by October 9th.

For the larger remote sections, the Administration has looked at who the teacher and paraeducator would be for those sections. They are not opposed to hiring as a means of reducing those sections. It is believed they can open the school year and be very effective with the current enrollment status.

1 Member Roy questioned if the two paraeducators for grades 2 and 5 are already on staff or the positions that
2 were authorized for new hires. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug indicated they are the positions the Board
3 authorized the Administration to hire.

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5 Member Roy requested the Administration walk through what occurs in an instance where an in-person student
6 was to become ill/quarantined, and need to move to remote learning.

7
8 Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug noted that student would join one of the remote teacher lessons for direct
9 instruction in the core content areas (would become part of that class), but their classroom teacher from the
10 physical school environment would provide up to three 20-minute remote sessions during the week, providing
11 the student is in good health. If a student is unable to participate in learning, the District would revert back to
12 its prior practice of the student remaining home to recover and would be caught up when they return.

13
14 Superintendent Corey remarked if a significant number of students quarantined there is a larger discussion as to
15 whether or not we should be in-person. If a classroom were asked to quarantine for 14 days, that teacher would
16 provide instruction remotely.

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18 Superintendent Corey stated the Board could consider providing the Administration the authority to hire and the
19 Administration create a flexible position that could assist with remote learning if students are quarantined.

20
21 Chairman Mann questioned what would be most helpful for the Administration moving forward.
22 Superintendent Corey stated concern with the number of homes currently for sale in the community. Part of the
23 reason some folks are selecting this District is because we are open for in-person instruction. The SAU is
24 informing people right now if they were to register, they would be remote, which could increase those numbers.
25 It is likely the Board will meet again at the end of the month.

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27 Chairman Mann questioned the will of the Board relative to how to proceed, e.g., authorize the Administration
28 to hire if needed or wait for an update at the end of the month.

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30 Vice Chairman Fareed stated the desire to give the Administration the tools needed to respond to the needs of
31 the District in a timely manner.

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33 Asked if there is existing staffing to cover all of the sections, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated there
34 are teachers to cover the sections. There are long-term substitute positions available to cover some short term
35 leaves if anyone is interested in applying for those positions.

36
37 Member Roy restated her concerns with regard to the remote class sizes. She is hopeful assistants can be found
38 for the 2nd and 5th grade remote classes. She spoke of her confidence in the Administration. If the teachers
39 who have been assigned to these remote sections are feeling confident in their ability to manage the class sizes
40 without the assistants we are hopeful to obtain, then she feels okay with that. She would like to check in with
41 those classes. She wants the Administration to be able to respond when and how needed.

42
43 Member Arthur stated the desire to strive for the same class sizes that are set for in-person. Member Kellner
44 stated her support of authorizing the Administration to hire. Chairman Mann stated his desire to receive another
45 datapoint. He could support it now, but believes it more prudent to receive additional information at the next
46 meeting. There is always the opportunity to meet sooner should the need arise.

Superintendent Corey spoke of school opening on the 9th. Between that time and September 30th, there are 15 school days. The Board could schedule its September meeting for the 30th. During those 15 days, the Administration can speak with those remote teachers to see how they are doing, where the dust has settled in regard to enrollment numbers, etc.

The consensus of the Board was to proceed in that fashion.

DELIBERATIONS

- To see what action the Board will take regarding the Memorandum of Understanding with the Union

MOTION BY MEMBER KELLNER TO APPROVE THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING, AS PRESENTED

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER ROY

ON THE QUESTION

The Board expressed gratitude to all involved in reaching this agreement.

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

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

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Nay:

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MOTION CARRIED

A request was made to amend the agenda to include discussion of an aspect of the re-opening plan.

There being no objection, the agenda was amended as requested.

Vice Chairman Fareed requested additional discussion of mask wearing, and spoke of concern related to the definition of mask break; is it 1 minute, an entire class period, and how does an adult in that situation have the technical skills to determine how long a period is safe and who is safe in that situation?

Superintendent Corey responded in terms of the mask piece, the concept basically is we are wearing masks first and foremost. They will be worn on the bus, in the hallways, if an individual gets up from their seat to go to the bathroom (moving through the 6' feet of students). What is provided is an opportunity for staff members to provide short breaks. He does not envision classes not having masks on. He envisions breaks being taken outside in the tents that have been installed. He stated he would be pleased to report back to the Board at its next meeting how things are going with regard to mask wearing.

We now know that a face covering makes a difference. The goal is to be in school for as long as possible. June would be ideal. To get there, all community members will have to continue to be diligent. We will start very rigid, and breaks will begin to be built into the schedule.

Member Roy commented there has been discussion around the definition of a face covering. That information did not seem to carry over. She requested that definition be publicized. Superintendent Corey stated that could occur. What is looked for is for students to show up to school with a face covering. There have been studies recently that indicate one is better than another, but anything is better than nothing. The District will help students in any way possible and will communicate anything that needs to be communicated to parents.

Member Arthur spoke of the importance of wearing masks, and expressed concern with the length of time students will be required to wear them. Superintendent Corey remarked teachers will gauge their class; they might ask about the number of students needing a mask break, and if seeing a significant number of hands go up and the proper social distancing is achieved they could allow for a break or it may be that they decide the class will go outdoors for 10 minutes. He is aware parents are concerned, but teachers do this kind of thing with fire drills, intruder drills, etc. There are so many things they teach every day that are difficult. They will make it happen with the masks. They will teach students how to walk 6' apart, etc.

Vice Chairman Fareed stated she is not coming from a place of mistrust but a place of desiring to articulate in a public setting and for the record. How he articulated his response was terrific and answered her concern 95%. Mentioned was the inevitable situation where masks will break, get lost, etc. She questioned if students would take their masks outdoors with them during recess and mask breaks. Superintendent Corey provided the example of one of the schools that is using cups to store masks while out at recess. There will be plenty of alternative masks that can be used if one is misplaced, etc.

Vice Chairman Fareed commented Principal Fowler's FAQ that went out with the schedules mentioned there will be 2 recesses per day as well as a 3rd mask break. Teachers can decide if additional mask breaks are needed.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY MEMBER ROY TO ADJOURN MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER FAREED

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

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

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Nay:

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MOTION CARRIED

The September 1, 2020 meeting of the Hollis School Board was adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Date _____ Signed _____