



HUDSON SCHOOL DISTRICT ♦ Hudson, New Hampshire
Hills Memorial Library, 18 Library Street

6:30 pm

Regular Meeting
Non-Public Session

Hudson School Board Meeting Approved Minutes January 24, 2022

In attendance:

Board Members

Gary Gasdia, Chairman
Diana LaMothe, Vice-chair
Ethan Beals
Michael Campbell
Gretchen Whiting
Kara Roy, Selectmen Liaison

SAU Staff

Larry Russell, Superintendent of Schools
Rachel Borge, Director Special Services
Jen Burk, Business Administrator
Kim Organek, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction

A. Call to Order [0:00:16]

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Gasdia called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. Ms. Roy led the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. Public Input [0:00:45]

Patrick Quinlan of 10 Hurley Street spoke of two citizen petition ballots that were to be on the ballot in March 2022 but were non-binding. He asked if that wording could be removed from the articles, as the Board members were elected to represent the citizens of Hudson for whom the petitions should be binding if they so voted. He asked the Board to make mask-wearing optional at schools. He asked when this (pandemic issues, mask-wearing) would end.

Suzanne Dozois of 25 St. Anthony Drive spoke about the Superintendent's platform to continue doing what the District was doing because it was working but she wondered how well things were

working (how students were doing in school, etc.). She spoke about the CDC, quarantine; missing school days; unreliability of Covid tests (PCP) and masks; negative effects on students; reinforcement of self-care; states with no mask mandates having lower (Covid) rates. She liked that the Board picked different people to be on the Superintendent search committee. She mentioned someone's suggestion to have a Superintendent who would know "when not to listen to people". She asked the Board to be open to new data.

Tobin Dozois of 25 St. Anthony Drive spoke about "science" changing daily and the ineffectiveness of masks. He did not agree with mask mandates.

Michael Tranfaglia of 24 Woodcrest Drive spoke to Warrant Articles 9 (citizen petition re. face masks) and 10 (petition re. Hudson town state of the schools). Last year's articles 20 and 21 passed and both were not recommended by the Selectmen but they respected the vote. He was concerned about Warrant Article 9 being non-binding. He remembered one Board member having issue with the petition in the summer as it was too costly and a logistic burden on the Town; it was now in front of the taxpayers for vote. He hoped the Board would respect the outcome either way.

Richard Watson of 21 Sunland Drive spoke about the importance of seeing facial expressions, especially for children/human interaction.

C. Presentations to the Board [0:19:04]

1. Moderator Paul Inderbitzen - plans for February 5th Deliberative Session

Mr. Inderbitzen reviewed plans for the Deliberative Session: there would be no refreshments; there was a mask requirement but also an area would be provided with a microphone for unmasked individuals; people should remain seated when possible; there would be a list of which Board member would speak to which Warrant Article/s; public input via email would be accepted to the Board chair or Moderator; HCTV would do a live stream; and a snow date would be on February 7th at 6:30pm.

2. Student Wellness and Supports

Asst. Supt. Kim Organek and Director of Student Wellness Sarah Muncey presented information regarding student wellness and supports. Multi-tiered systems of support for behavioral health and wellness included: K-8 Responsive Classroom training, High School Freshman Seminar, additional school counselors, SEL Interventionists and Restrictive Practices Training.

Ms. Muncey mentioned that students were struggling even before the pandemic with mental health, bullying, family issues and emotional behavioral disorders. Schools were the "hubs" where students went and a goal was to ensure they were ready to learn. The District was in the third year of the Project Aware Grant; \$1.75 million was the total award being used for systems. ESSER III money and coaching from the NHDOE were also available.

There were three tiers of support: tier 3 for students with the highest needs (5% of students); tier 2 for at-risk students (15%); and tier 1 for all students (80%). Teams looked at needs to support students. This included a partnership with Greater Nashua Mental Health who also

provided professional development opportunities. Data points identified students in need of support - such as absenteeism. The QuickBase system was used to measure student outcomes. Ms. Muncey reported that a task force was developed at the elementary level to deal with bus reports and that there would be training with bus drivers on how to connect with students, etc. Long-term goals included: evaluating supports, reviewing student outcomes, and strengthening the system for sustainability.

Ms. Muncey mentioned that transition help was being worked on at the high school. There would be review about the possibility of hiring another Mental Health Coordinator before July 1st. There would be training for recess monitors who dealt with hygiene issues and social/emotional aspects of Covid. Elementary students were happy to be at lunch and recess. Issues included learning at home and regulating emotion. She would look into data related to the impact of stress on students and teachers related to absenteeism.

3. Schoology

There was review of Schoology which began in the Fall. Benefits to teachers included the ability to share curriculum materials and to automatically grade some assessments. Student supports included assignments/deadlines in one place; synchronous and asynchronous work; and feedback. There was data review showing the use of Schoology at Hudson Memorial e.g., submission and views of assignments in the week after holiday break. Ms. Whiting requested information on what a regular week of usage looked like. An example of Schoology use at the high school was Civics Assessment (assignment of random questions to help students pass to graduate). There were teacher competencies by ability level. The hope was to have teachers advanced by the end of the year. Parents/guardians could view student classes, grades, assignments created in Schoology and missing work. A Schoology Group shared resources and lesson plans. Next steps included: February 1st: roll out to parents and February 3rd: informative email offering live remote instructional sessions, as well as summer training.

Mr. Beals noted that there were some concerns that the system was not easy to navigate. Mr. Russell said that there would be a learning curve and that Schoology did more than Google Classroom. It was noted that master instructors volunteered to do the pilot with their students. Schoology was instructional-based and there was expertise in buildings for teachers to access. IReady synced with the system. Teachers and students were using the system to high extent especially in the elementary level. "Clunkiness" was part of the learning curve. It was suggested to do a survey with frequently asked questions to get feedback that might help with issues to address.

D. Old Business [1:55:58]

1. Strategic Plan - Discussion

Terry Wolf, Director of Strategic Engagement and Communication, shared an updated version of the strategic plan that included reformatting to be easier to read and additional sections on accomplishments and status of progress. The Board had previously approved the original plan; this draft would be updated.

2. COVID-19 Protocols - Informational [2:01:11]

Superintendent Russell provided information on current protocols. He noted that science changed. He spoke about logic. The Omicron variant accounted for 99.5% of cases in the country. In other countries there were peaks that dropped, as was the case in the USA. On November 15th, there were 80 cases in Hudson, then 343 last Friday, but it was down to 249 today. Omicron was less severe especially to vaccinated people.

	November 15	January 24
Hudson cases	80	249
7 day average	860	1973
Hospitalizations	149	233
Vaccinations avail.	limited	widely available
Dominant variant	Delta	Omicron
Cases for week	15	
School Cases		January 6: 167 January 14: 190 last week: 54

A lot of staff were out after the holidays and all staff chipped to provide coverage as school remained open. Per the CDC and DHHS, isolation for those with no symptoms was now 5 days as opposed to 10. Getting vaccinated made a difference, though Mr. Russell did not favor forcing people to get vaccinated. There was not a big draw from the community to do weekly testing. If the improving trend continued, mask mitigation could be lessened. He understood the issues of not seeing faces and learning language when masked, but noted they were moving towards remedies and mental health programs regarding this. Mr. Gasdia noted that successes included keeping students in school even with high numbers of cases and that sports, Scouts, etc. were still ongoing. There would be an updated report at the February 7th meeting.

3. FY23 Warrant Articles [2:22:42]

Business Administrator Burk reviewed the updated Warrant Articles.

Operating budget: the Budget Committee reduced the budget by \$650,000; the public did not express agreement with the reduction. Administration considered reductions in new proposed positions and areas such as elementary furniture replacement and Superintendent supplies.

The reduced budget that the Budget Committee recommended was: \$61,595,033. The default budget was \$62,023,797. There was discussion about not recommending the BudCom’s suggested budget total, based on the work the Board did with the budget and to make a statement that the Board did not agree with the reduced budget.

Mr. Campbell made a motion to not recommend the Budget Committee’s recommended budget of \$61,595,033. Ms. LaMothe seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

E. New Business [2:34:34]

1. Warrant Article Assignments - Discussion and Decision

The Board reviewed who would present each Warrant Article at the February 5th Deliberative Session:

<u>Warrant Article</u>	<u>School Board Member</u>
1	Mr. Gasdia and Ms. LaMothe
2	Mr. Campbell and Mr. Beals
3	Ms. Whiting
4	Ms. Whiting and Ms. LaMothe
5	Mr. Gasdia
6	Mr. Beals
7	Mr. Beals
8	Mr. Campbell
9	Petitioner for Face Mask Petition
10	Petitioner for State of the School District

There was discussion about the fact that the petitions were advisory only per statute and that the one regarding face masks was an operational matter of the school. There was concern about the non-specific wording of the petition to hold an annual State of the School District (that also stated it would take effect once passed). All Board members saw the value of such an annual meeting presenting curriculum, however.

Ms. LaMothe made a motion to vote to not recommend Warrant Article 9. Ms. Whiting seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

Mr. Campbell made a motion to recommend Warrant Article 10. Ms. LaMothe seconded the motion. Motion failed 1:4.

Mr. Beals made a motion that the School Board would annually vote to have a State of the District event. Ms. LaMothe seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

2. 2022 Alvirne Graduation - Decision [3:14:10]

Superintendent Russell shared Principal Steve Beals’ recommendations for this year’s graduation ceremony. High School Seniors were surveyed and decided to hold their graduation at the SNHU Arena on June 9, 2022. The Board liked that the decision was made by the Seniors themselves. It was noted that the cost was less expensive at the arena and that weather was not an issue, though a con was not graduating at the home school.

Ms. LaMothe made a motion to recommend holding the Alvirne Graduation on June 9, 2022 at the SNHU Arena in Manchester, NH. Ms. Whiting seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

3. Facility Use Request (Decision) [3:20:36]

There was a Hills House field use request from British Cars of New Hampshire for their annual Show of Dreams charity fundraiser.

Mr. Beals made a motion to approve the Facilities Use Request as presented. Ms. Whiting seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

F. Recommended Action [3:20:55]

1. Manifests - Done

2. Minutes - Review and approve

- a. 9/20/2021
- b. 10/18/2021
- c. 10/25/2021
- d. 11/4/2021
- e. 11/15/2021
- f. 12/6/2021 - needed a second vote since there were 4 members
- g. 1/3/2022

Edits included:

Minutes of 9/20/21: Call to Order should say 6PM

Non-public vote should state "4-1 with Mr. Beals voting nay"

Minutes of 10/18/21: Motion on p. 7 should note line item 10002840-650

Minutes of 10/25/21: Motion on p. 3 should say grant "fund" line

Ms. Whiting made a motion to approve the following minutes as amended:

9/20/2021, 10/18/2021, 10/25/2021, 11/4/2021, 11/15/2021, and 1/3/2022. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

Mr. Beals made a motion to approve the minutes of 12/6/2021. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 4:0:1 (abstention - G. Whiting)

G. Committee Reports [3:25:05]**1. Superintendent Search Committee**

Mr. Beals and Mr. Campbell provided an update on the search. The first interview was last week - work was ongoing.

H. Reports to the Board (Information) [3:26:52]**1. Superintendent Report - reviewed earlier in the meeting****2. Assistant Superintendent Report**

A kindergartener doing iReady diagnostic had made a picture for Ms. Organek's office . There was suicide prevention training on January 14th. Senior Capstone projects were presented last week and were impressive.

3. Director of Special Services Report

Ms. Borge thanked Ms. Muncey for the Wellness presentation and noted that helping with mental health was fundamental for students to be ready to learn. She thanked the staff and parents for their flexibility as morning preschool was held longer due to the midday ice storm on January 5th. Senior Capstone projects went well; one on ADHD would be used to help with Professional Development.

4. Business Administrator Report

Ms. Burk reported that staff were happy with the radios that were filled out in October and that there were improvements to the coverage in the buildings.

I. Correspondence [3:32:25]

1. Discipline Report - Informational

Superintendent Russell presented the discipline report for December 2021.

2. Financial Report - Informational

Ms. Burk presented the most recent financial report. The anticipated fund balance was \$784,000. She did not anticipate needing to offset losses in the food service program.

3. School Board Self-evaluation - Postponed**J. Board of Selectmen Liaison Comments [3:36:32]**

February 5th: School Deliberative Session

February 12th: Town Deliberative Session

March 8th: Election

The deadline to register to run for office was Friday.

K. Board Member Comments [3:37:10]

Mr. Campbell spoke about the importance to attend Deliberative Session and vote. He offered his help to people considering running for the School Board.

Ms. Whiting also encouraged people to attend Deliberative Session.

Mr. Beals mentioned that middle school students went to the high school CTE and it was a successful event.

Ms. LaMothe reiterated the importance of attending Deliberative Session and noted that people could email her or Mr. Gasdia, though they had to be in person to vote.

Mr. Gasdia hoped people looked at the big picture and realized that a lot of great things were going on in the District

L. Non-Public Session Per RSA 91-A:3 II (c) [3:43:03]**1. Superintendent Evaluation****2. Student Matter**

At 10:14 pm, Mr. Beals made a motion to enter into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II (c). Ms. Whiting seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0. Roll call vote.

The non-public session began at 10:27 pm. Mr. Russell discussed a request by a parent for their children to remain in Hudson schools. This was a discussion item; the board did not make any motions.

The Board then discussed a student matter.

Mr. Beals made a motion to seal this section of this non-public session for 99 years. Second by Mr. Campbell. Motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Russell, Ms. Organek, and Ms. Borge left the meeting.

The Superintendent evaluation was discussed. Ms. Whiting and Mr. Campbell will meet with Superintendent Russell to discuss the evaluation and goals.

Mr. Beals and Mr. Campbell discussed the superintendent search.

M. Adjournment

Motion to exit non-public and adjourn by Mr. Beals, second by Ms. Whiting. Motion passed 5-0.

Meeting adjourned 11:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Susan DeFelice (public)

Ms. LaMothe (non-public)