



Approved: 6-17-26 (as amended)

**HOLLIS BROOKLINE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD
MAY 13, 2026
MEETING MINUTES**

A regular meeting of the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board was conducted on Wednesday, May 13, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. at the Hollis Brookline Middle School Gymnasium.

Holly Deurloo Babcock, Chairperson, presided:

Members of the Board Present: Kate Stoll, Vice Chairperson
 Amy Kellner, Secretary
 Robert Mann
 Tom Solon (participated electronically)
 Cindy VanCoughnett
 Beth Janine Williams

Members of the Board Absent:

Also in Attendance: Gina Bergskaug, Superintendent
 Lauren DiGennaro, Asst. Superintendent of Student Services
 Dorothy Flaherty, Asst. Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction
 Jacob Hess, Principal, Hollis Brookline High School
 Patrick West, Principal, Hollis Brookline Middle School
 Yolanda Flamino, Asst. Principal, Hollis Brookline High School

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

Chair Deurloo Babcock spoke of correspondence the Board has received since the time of its last meeting. At least 10 emails have been received in support of the current structure of the music program. An email was received in support of right sizing the district, others requesting agenda items and congratulating our We the People group that was in Washington, DC in April.

A request was made to amend the agenda to include an update from the Town of Hollis Capital Expenditure Advisory Committee (CEAC).

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

CONSENT AGENDA

**MOTION BY MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT TO MOVE THE CONSENT AGENDA
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANN
MOTION CARRIED
6-0-0**

APPOINTMENT OF PROCESS OBSERVER

Chair Deurloo Babcock appointed Amy Kellner to serve as Process Observer.

As Tom Solon was participating electronically, in accordance with the Right to Know Law, Chair Deurloo Babcock requested he state, for the record; where he was, why his attendance in person was not reasonably practical, who, if anyone, was with him, and whether or not he was able to hear the proceedings.

Member Solon responded he was at his residence, his attendance in person was not reasonably practical given personal reasons, no one was with him, and he could hear the proceedings.

Chair Deurloo Babcock stated, for the record, those present at the meeting were able to hear Member Solon and reminded the Board all votes would be taken by Roll Call.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board – **Annual Meeting** March 19, 2026

**MOTION BY MEMBER MANN TO APPROVE, AS PRESENTED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER STOLL**

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

Yea: Cindy VanCoughnett, Beth Williams, Amy Kellner, Rob Mann, Kate Stoll, Tom Solon,
Holly Deurloo Babcock
7
Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board April 8, 2026

- Page 3, Line 45; replace “there’s” with “theirs”
- Page 7, Line 35; “replace “as” with “was” following “There”
- Page 13, Line 24; replace “note” with “noted”
- Page 14, Line 43; replace “he” with “the”
- Page 16, Line 13; replace “teaches” with “teachers”
- Page 17, Line 7; replace “he” with “the”
- Pag 19, Line 42; replace “hose” with “those”

**MOTION BY MEMBER WILLIAMS TO APPROVE, AS AMENDED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANN**

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

Yea: Cindy VanCoughnett, Beth Williams, Amy Kellner, Rob Mann, Kate Stoll, Tom Solon,
Holly Deurloo Babcock

7

Nay:

0

MOTION CARRIED

Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board – **Non-Public**.

April 8, 2026

MOTION BY MEMBER STOLL TO APPROVE, AS PRESENTED

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS

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

Yea: Cindy VanCoughnett, Beth Williams, Amy Kellner, Rob Mann, Kate Stoll, Tom Solon,
Holly Deurloo Babcock

7

Nay:

0

MOTION CARRIED

PRESENTATION ON ENROLLMENT AND CLASS SIZE DATA

Chair Deurloo Babcock thanked members of the public for their attendance. Although unable to speak for the entire Board, she wished to state she has been reading social media, the Petition, Letters to the Editor, and posted articles, and is very aware that many are in attendance to speak to the Reduction in Force of one of our music teachers at the high school. We have rearranged our agenda a bit hoping to hear from many of those in attendance.

She will begin by providing context into the decision that was made in April, the Superintendent will then present more of the details. There will then be the annual May presentation of class requests from the high school Principal. Following that, the floor will be open for public comment, and later on in the agenda the Board will be discussing potential changes to our current class size policy, which may be of interest to all of you.

She stated her belief that everyone on the Board and Administrative team believes in the importance of music education and performing arts both during the school day and as a vibrant part of our extra-curricular program. Music education broadens students’ perspectives, provides opportunities for life-long learning, and is an important part of educating the whole child.

Not only that, music and performing arts add that spark that makes a dynamic, well-rounded, and well-developed community. For that reason, she wished to be clear that we have not cut Band. There will be the same number of sections of Band running this year as there were for the last few years. These classes will be taught by our veteran certified music teacher. We have not cut the band director position, which is a stipend after-school position.

For the last few years, the Administration has been extremely creative in trying to keep two full-time music teachers. For the last 6 years we have been struggling with a smaller number of students taking music classes. We have tried a variety of solutions, one of which includes allowing music teachers to teach outside of their certification area to fill their schedules. The Superintendent will explain this further during her presentation.

Unfortunately, much of the frustration with the situation is due to the fact that we couldn't do these presentations in April due to the legal and ethical requirements surrounding discussion of employees' contracts, which is part of our regular Board year calendar. In terms of our Board calendar, every year in the fall we review our Program of Studies (POS), which, as you know, is the listing of our course offerings for our students to choose from as they consider their schedules.

In March, we present a budget to the voters. That budget, if approved, is the guiding plan for spending. Sometimes the Administration underruns or spends less in a budgeted area and sometimes it overruns a budgeted area usually due to students' needs. For example, this year we have been underrunning special education due to changes in student needs, but we have been overrunning vocational education because more students than usual have opted into our CTE program, where they leave for 3 periods a day.

The Board receives regular revenue & expense reports to stay up with the current year's budget. Every year, in April, we review staff contracts in a non-public meeting as per the legal requirement. Then in May the building leadership presents the Board with the number of course requests per class and their plan for scheduling, and then finally in October or November, the Principals present us with the actual course enrollments for the year.

For the past 6 years we have seen lower numbers not just in Concert and Jazz Band, but across many of our music offerings. Over this period of time, during the POS and class size presentations, this Board has discussed the decreasing numbers for our band and music classes. In November of 2022, we discussed small music numbers and the combining of Guitar 1 and 2 in order to hold the class. In May of 2023 we discussed changes that were made in the POS to encourage the growth of music participation. In November of 2023, we had an extensive discussion regarding consolidation of small underenrolled music classes, but the leadership team asked that we give music some more time to build enrollment, and we agreed to do so. We were hopeful that after COVID and with the eventual graduation of the incredibly small class of 2026 the numbers would increase in a few years, and we wanted to give the program an opportunity to grow.

Over the past few years, the Administration has also revised the POS more than once, and most recently in November of 2025, in an attempt to increase those music requests. All of those revisions to the POS in all of our departments are driven by suggestions from the department chairs themselves because they know their students. They look at their students and try to figure out what would be the best way to develop a POS that would appeal to their students.

We have been watching these numbers for years and have been concerned. Yes, the budget for the upcoming year passed in March, but we are required by the Collective Bargaining Agreement to present the staff with their individual contracts in April. The staffing needs are really only clear once we know what our students want to take, and the course requests are not clear until late March or early April.

RSA 91-A:3 is the law that states that a Board goes into non-public when discussing the dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee. This year, while the Administration reviewed contracts in our April meeting, in our non-public, the course request numbers were brought to our attention as a staffing concern. Although tonight Mr. Hess will be presenting us with the fuller picture, the recommendation was made to tighten up class sizes and thus not fill a few designated positions. If an employee's position is not going to be filled for a year, it is appropriate for the employee to be the first to know.

We have been making exceptions to policy and have been out of compliance with ed specs for a few years. This year we simply hit a tipping point caused by a few factors. First, we have been holding out because projections indicated that even though our enrollment is lower than it had been in the past, it was forecast to bump up a bit. However, this past year, in the Fall, the NESDEC, which is the group that does our forecasting, their forecast actually changed from the previous year's, and enrollment is predicted to stay right about where it

is. We are not declining enrollment, but we are expecting to not see any increase and to be stable for many years.

On top of the lower numbers in general, we have had a significant change in State requirements beginning with our incoming 9th graders. We reviewed these changes in the Fall in our public meetings. The revised POS outlines them in detail and is available on the HBHS website under the learning menu. These new requirements in essence added additional coursework for our students to graduate; mostly in the Social Studies area and thus decrease how many electives a student will need to graduate. Music in high school is considered an elective. With less elective space in their schedule, it makes it more difficult for students to pursue electives like the arts. That is unfortunate. Even though we would like to see more students sign up for free choice elective classes, these systemic pressures make it less likely.

Secondly, we had the threat of the open enrollment Bill and changes to the open enrollment law. We tried to protect ourselves with a Warrant Article at the COOP District meeting where we heard very clearly through both public input and with the vote, that voters would like to limit the number of students who can enroll in our schools whose families don't live or pay taxes in our communities. But the legislation that was gaining considerable traction at the State level would potentially have overridden our own approved Warrant Article. Our understanding was that the Bill, if passed, would rely on our class size policy and class enrollment numbers to indicate what our capacity is for students who reside outside our district and who we might be forced to take.

This potential change triggered the Administration to take a harder look at how many classes and sections were significantly below not only our class size maximums, but also our minimum class size numbers. In Concord, there is still an amendment to the Health Care Bill with open enrollment language that could potentially create changes to this law, although the original Bill did fail.

Finally, combined all of this with the continued pressure from members of the public to address future budget concerns. For the past ten years our budget has passed with over 60% majority or with a visual card vote. This year's budget passed with a much lower threshold and 2 out of the 4 SAU budgets failed this year.

Taking all of this into account, we realized that we were at a tipping point referred to earlier. We have had to make some hard decisions, which truly concern all of us. We have always supported a POS with many options for our students. We want our students to thrive and grow. In terms of music specifically, we have made exceptions for our class size policy for six years, and we have also allowed our teachers to teach outside of their certification area for quiet a few years.

Increases in State requirements, potential open enrollment legislation, the continued expansion of school choice programs, and budgetary pressures have gotten us to this point. Everyone on this Board and in this Administration is very unhappy that we are at this point.

Now, Superintendent Bergskaug is going to review the details of the numbers and the plans moving forward.

Superintendent Bergskaug provided a presentation (can be viewed [here](#) beginning at tape counter 27:39).

Our class size policy, IIB, is available online. As it stands, states that classes shall have a minimum of 15 and a maximum of 25 students unless specified below. Band, Choir/Chorus have a maximum of 50, computer-based courses depend on the number of computers in the lab, family and consumer science has a maximum of 16, physical education 35, and science 24.

It also states that classes may have fewer than fifteen students if one or more of the following are met:

The class is one specifically designed to be small, i.e., remedial classes, special education classes, etc.
The class is designed to meet state minimum standards.
The class is a capstone course in a series, i.e., Spanish 4 in the Spanish 1-4 program,
The class is an AP course.

Exceptions have also been made if having a new course and trying to gain traction.

In the November/December timeframe, the Board approves the POS. The POS is the listing of all of the courses that we are planning to offer students. In February, students select the desired courses for the coming year along with some alternates. In March, the Administration determines the number of sections of each course we are able to offer. In the April/May timeframe, the schedule is built and students are loaded. In May, the course request tally goes to the Board. This is our typical month where we take a look at how many sections of AP Government we will have, how many sections of Band we will be offering, etc. In June, student schedules are released. In October, the final section enrollment is reported to the Board.

If we propose that we will have 5 sections of a course but then one is say period 7, some students choose to have senior or junior options and drop that class leaving us with a course that might have enrollment far below policy, but we built it based on student selection. Between May and September/October, we see course enrollment numbers decrease based on individual student selection.

When we are looking at our course request tally we have to look to see if the class exceeds the specific maximum size or falls below the recommended minimum outlined in policy. The Principal consults with the Superintendent who will assist in reviewing the situation before deciding to take steps such as hiring additional personnel or adding or eliminating a section or using other resources. Recently we had a shift. We had a computer science teacher and an engineering teacher. With fewer selections in computer science, we combined that position into one individual who teaches all computer science and engineering. We kept both positions in the budget for an additional year to see if the course requests changed, but ultimately we reduced that to one individual.

Superintendent Bergskaug remarked she has been advocating for more time because there was an interruption with COVID in our music numbers. She knew that the class of 2026 was the smallest class size in the past decade. She was concerned if we reduced a teacher and then need the teacher the following year it would be really difficult to get that position back. The decision was made to keep the small numbers in classes because this is just a dip in enrollment. There is an intentional effort to maintain staffing to best manage the long-term needs of the school beyond that small class of 2026. Despite expected class enrollment growth, and very high numbers in our elementary districts, population has leveled at the high school. We have about 35 students enrolled in the Academy of Science and Design (ASD). We have 51 students opting to collect the education freedom account rather than attend our public schools. That is 86 students we should have in the high school right now are choosing other pathways. Those are 86 students she had planned on being able to take some of these additional classes. They are not here. The class size policy violation became unsustainable.

Currently, we have about 130 sections running below policy minimums. Teachers are required to teach courses for which they are certified or the school is flagged and negatively impacted. We have been negatively impacted by our teachers teaching outside of their certified area. We have been creating schedules to fill their schedule and keep our teachers whole, full-time teachers. It has been occurring during this enrollment dip. This negatively impacts the school and the students who are enrolled in the course that is being taught by a teacher who is not certified in that content area.

Despite the passage of the proposed budget, fiscal responsibility does matter. Multiple departments have been impacted. The best choice is to reduce through attrition. The Library Media Specialist position at the middle

school will not be filled. That is due to a retirement. There is a vacancy in the English Department at the high school that will not be filled as well as a vacancy in the Science Department that will not be filled. Music course requests have reduced offerings to five sections. Five sections is one full-time teacher. Beginning with the class of 2030, the changes in the Ed306's increase required courses and reduce free choice electives.

Providing examples of historical approaches to supporting music, Superintendent Bergskaug noted that years ago, the Hollis Upper Elementary School offered band within the day and the Captain Samuel Douglass Academy offered a parent-pay option. Feeling strongly that was not equitable access for grade 4-6 students. She grant-funded band and strings in FY20, 21, and 22 while she slowly built it into the Brookline School District budget in FY22. Beginning in that year, any student who wanted to participate in band in Brookline had the same free opportunity that their peers in Hollis had. We have made multiple changes to the POS to try to better meet the needs of the students to make band, music, and art more accessible or more desirable for students. There was also the addition of a summer band camp to try to rejuvenate the program.

Displayed was historical information on band enrollment numbers. The district previously ran 2-3 sections of band and had really healthy numbers. The dip in band enrollment far exceeds the dip in enrollment. That means we have to take a close look at what our offerings are and how to make them more appealing to the student body. We're now down to one section of Jazz Band, one section of Concert Band, have integrated Honors Concert Band into Concert Band this year so that those three students still had that opportunity available to them. Next year a similar decision was made with Jazz and Honors Jazz Band to combine them. If they were separate, they would not be able to run at all. There was a strong desire to make sure that we did not lose band or music altogether. We went against the POS by changing the way band was; had offered it as an every other and switched it to every day to ensure students would have access to Band or Jazz Band or both next year. Our numbers are healthy at the middle school, but there is a shift when the middle school students enter the high school. We need to dig into that and better understand why those choices are being made.

Less glamorous are the requirements that she, as the Superintendent, has to consider. RSA 193-E requires school districts to provide access to an adequate education. Adequate education is defined by the State and Legislature. Ed 503.01 requires that employees hold a valid credential appropriate to their assigned position. Ed 503.02 states that the Superintendent would lose his/her credential for placing an employee in an assignment outside of their credential. We are at that point right now.

As we move forward to next year, we are moving forward with the 1.0 music teacher meaning 1 teacher, however, two full-time teachers will remain in the FY28 budget as we hope to grow the program. While we are filling one position, the hope is we make it available and if the interest increases we will have the funding to support it. We would potentially add stipend positions to support music as needed. Much of what she has heard through emails and phone calls she has received was related to the after-school component not simply the curriculum program we are looking at right now. The after-school component had been supported by more than just the two music teachers. That will continue to happen. The music teachers kind of determine what they would propose to do the following year, however, we understand there are so many offerings and that is burdensome for one individual, which is why we are open to additional individuals. We have reached out to community members and teachers from other schools who have already offered to participate in these after school activities.

We will continue to offer the variety of music courses to students. We're aiming to right size the staff based on course requests and evolving requirements. We will continue to institute changes to the POS identifying elective course offerings potentially in an every other year format. That might be especially important in arts where you cannot pick ceramics every year but maybe every other year if it is less desirable and there are not enough students in one particular year. We will continue to offer courses and create the schedule based on

courses selected by students. That is really important. Students drive what courses run. If we don't have the students we simply cannot support running the course.

Jacob Hess, Principal, Hollis Brookline High School, reiterated when the process begins in February with receipt of class enrollment requests, they use the numbers to build this. While we go through the numbers, any class that is shown as struck through is a class for which a decision was made not to run. There are 25 courses across all content areas that we are not running due to either slightly or far below the class enrollment policy.

Principal Hess spoke of the work he and Assistant Principal Flamino did in building this master schedule, and the many conversations on how to be creative. They discussed the music courses and how they combined the Jazz Band and Honor Jazz Band, etc. They looked closely at ensuring graduation requirements are met. There are English classes with a smaller class size that are being run because there is the requirement for 4.5 credits of English. We still need some electives especially for our junior and seniors.

They discussed at length some alterations to the POS moving forward; how and when we offer different classes and electives. A class that did not run this year we want to ensure that we can try to get enrollment for following years. We have a little bit of saturation right now with some of our electives. We have a lot of offerings that are really getting low numbers spread out so really looking at what we offer and when we offer it to hopefully bolster those numbers to get those up as we go through.

The only department that was not overly hit was math. Those courses are full-year courses. We were able to fill all of those.

In our science department we made decisions not to run a few classes. Honors Physics and a Physics class both having low numbers, instead of not running either one of those we had discussions with the honors physics students who had requested that. Some elected to move up to AP Physics and some down to regular Physics.

In our social studies department, we are really starting to do a rotation with Archeology and Anthropology. We offer those every year but are not able to sustain them every year with enrollment requests. We are looking at alternating those classes to try to get those numbers up as well.

AP Art is a class that we are not able to run next year due to low requests. We're looking at the prerequisites for that class to see if we can open those up to some more digital offerings as well so that our students are able to take that. We are hoping to see a rise in enrollment for that as well.

We've talked about the music sections. Again, the total number of requests. You can see with the numbers in deciding to combine the Concert and Honors Concert and Honors Jazz and Jazz bands. We still have pretty good enrollment numbers with the choirs.

Our numbers across the board in our world language classes are relatively strong. Our Spanish classes more so than our French classes, but we are still able to offer that. Our Latin III class only has 5 students enrolled but we are running that. Next year is the first year of offering that. We felt strongly about running that knowing that we have 22 students in the Latin II class so building a 3-course sequence is really important to us.

Chair Deurloo Babcock asked for information to be shared on what occurred with the Acting and Improv. Theatre classes.

Principal Hess stated they were two separate courses. We had requests of 7 for Acting and 9 for Improv. Theatre. The original decision was not to run those at all and then when we looked at the reduction of the teaching we thought about combining those two courses and moving it to the English Department so that we

could still have that class. When we talked with the students in those two classes there was a mixture of no I would prefer not to take it or I was only taking it because I wanted to take it with a certain teacher but that's not being offered any longer. We were able to move those students to some other electives. The enrollment numbers were just not high enough for us to run that as a combined course or single courses.

Chair Deurloo Babcock remarked the one thing she thinks needs to be pointed out is that the certification required to teach Acting and Improv is in the English department. Principal Hess stated that is technically. We don't have anyone who is certified to teach theatre courses so we don't have a theatre teacher at the high school. You can teach it out of the English department. That is another area that we are talking about with our POS; creating a theatre course that could encompass all parts of theatre, e.g., acting, stage, and creating a course that we hope to build and get a lot of interest in.

PUBLIC INPUT

Chair Deurloo Babcock stated before opening the floor for public input, there are few procedures and rules pertaining to public participation as per the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board policy BEDH:

1. We have set aside one hour for public input tonight. This period may be extended by a majority vote of the Board.
2. Speakers must provide their name and address.
3. Please direct your comments to the Board Chair.
4. This is not a back-and-forth, the Board generally does not respond to public input, but rather this is a listening session. We may ask a clarifying question, but we will not be responding in general. However, many times, after public input is closed, we may return or reflect on your comments during the regular order of business of our meeting. Tonight, you may be interested in listening to our discussion and deliberation on the class size policy later on in the agenda.
5. We will be allotting 3 minutes per speaker as per our policy, but we hope that you will try to keep your input brief so that more people can speak to the topic. We actually set a timer and will try to give a 30-second warning.
6. We will take comment first from individuals who have not spoken, we may or may not allow for repeat speakers. Unlike the annual meetings, there is no one to move the question so we may have to end without hearing from people multiple times.
7. Consistent with RSA 91-A:3, the Board will not entertain comments that refer to an individuals' qualifications or abilities, especially anything that could be perceived as negative. We need to protect the professional reputation of our staff, you may speak about a position, but not a person.
8. Please maintain a civil manner and be respectful.
9. Finally, we will allow students to speak.

Chair Deurloo Babcock opened the floor for public input at 6:41 p.m.

During the period of public input, the audio was impacted by an echo causing the applause following each speaker to result in the audio being inaudible during times when the name and address of speaker(s) were provided.

Although students provided their names and addresses, listed are last names and town.

Brad Smith, 16 Ranger Road, Hollis

Is a resident, district parent, and band director with 20 years of experience. We often talk about the importance of a well-rounded student. Music is an engine that builds them. It is one of the few disciplines that requires a

student to be simultaneously analytical, physical and deeply creative. When a student picks up an instrument they aren't just learning notes, they are practicing discipline, problem solving and the communal work ethic that forms the bedrock of future leadership.

In education, personnel are the curriculum. Students don't just join band, they join a community where the director serves as a custodian of institutional memory, managing a complex eco system of traditions, community partnerships, and technical logistics, and as a mentor who fosters accountability and years of personal growth.

Eliminating the independent band director position may save a salary today but it discards the architect of the program's future and leads to increased costs down the road. The Administration frames this cut as a logistical necessity based on enrollment, but a cut is not a plan it is a retreat. The proposal to merge this role with the choral department ignores the specialized education and skillset required for instrumental instruction. Asking a vocal specialist to manage complex instrumental mechanics is like asking a Spanish teacher to teach Mandarin because they are both world languages.

This doesn't just reduce quality; it sets the educator up for failure and puts tens of thousands of dollars in district equipment at risk. Furthermore, relying on stipends for after school roles especially if they are primarily filled by one person ignores the reality of human limits. Expecting one teacher to manage the daytime curriculum of two departments while maintaining a double schedule of festivals, clinics, and performances on evenings and weekends is a recipe for burnout, higher staff turnover and potentially the collapse of the entire music department.

Enrollment dips in music programs are often symptoms of pipeline disruptions and scheduling barriers, not a lack of interest. If the Board is concerned about numbers, the solution is a strategic plan for recruitment and retention from 4th grade through graduation not the elimination of the staff needed to execute it.

If this position is cut you aren't pausing the program you are breaking it. Rebuilding later will cost far more in time and resources than maintaining it today. I urge you to preserve this position, shift the focus to rebuilding rather than dismantling. Let's protect the creative heart of our schools and the stability our students deserve.

Brendan LaFlame, 8 Nartoff Road, Hollis

Thanked the Board and Administration for the information provided. He found the information to be very helpful. It doesn't mean that he agrees with the decision.

Although not an expert on performing arts programs, he comes from a background where he feels he can speak intelligently and with experience about these types of programs. To cut the band director position and say that band will still be offered is a disservice to our students. He thinks it to be asking too much of one person. Currently if a student is taking jazz band and concert band they essentially have 8 classes per week. Band is much more than what is happening in the room. It is after hours rehearsals, auditions for various festivals and State programs. More importantly, the program is about developing confidence, learning patience, teamwork, collaboration, critical and creative thinking, networking, exploring creative avenues, finding a sense of self through the arts and setting oneself up for future successes. One critical factor in all of these is the person that is responsible for teaching. This district has been very fortunate to have great instruction dating back to the mid '90s when he was a music student here.

He would be remiss if he did not mention the person who is most greatly affected by this decision happens to be a Hollis Brookline graduate who went through the music program and now he is being told that that program didn't matter essentially. He came back here because he saw the value in the system.

His family recently attended the All-state music festival. Our students were awesome. The whole event was overshadowed by other staff members and students from other districts laughing at this situation. It is an embarrassment, and it is hurting our reputation.

Bonnie Bruno, 35 Milton Place, Hollis

Spoke of the promise of Hollis, and not wanting to wake one day to find that promise broken. We have a vibrant, robust community. We have great property values, which are an investment, because of our public schools. These things are incredibly integral to what creates our town. She does not, and never has had children in the school system but has been happy to pay her fair share to support the public schools and students. She does not want to have a town where people say Hollis used to be... There are residents here who are 65 and older who probably raised their kids here and are looking for a return on their investment.

We have families moving here who are making an investment in their students and their properties and some like her who bought property and made the investment because of the promise of Hollis. That major foundation for our Hollis promise is because of the schools and it being a desirable community.

She spoke of her Godson who went through the New Hampshire public school system, had band from 5th grade until graduating from Brown University where he led his band because of his experience in the New Hampshire public schools and that kind of a program.

We could be killing our Hollis promise by 1,000 cuts over time and slowly, but they will add up and it is hard to come back from. She spoke of starting to pay attention because of what is happening at the State and town levels with public education. The majority of people in our town use public schools. Over time and slowly, the reputation of Hollis starts to get tarnished.

Miss Shapiro, Brookline

Student at the high school. Being a band member has taught her teamwork, patience, confidence, and has given her many learning experiences.

Band is more than a class; it is a place where students learn discipline, teamwork and patience. It gives students a safe place to belong and express themselves. Our band director does more than teach music. He encourages us, supports us when we are struggling, and is an active member in our communities.

A great band director changes lives not just teaches music. Eliminating this position will hurt students academically, emotionally, and socially. As students, we have a sense of pride in band and representing our school. Please consider keeping the position of band director open.

Katie Marino, 34 Wallace Brook Road, Brookline

Understands budgets and enrollment numbers are important, but removing the band director position is undeniably a cut to the band program regardless of whether band classes technically remain on the schedule. A strong band program depends on dedicated leadership, mentorship, recruitment, performance preparation, and consistency for students over many years. Removing a dedicated director fundamentally changes the quality of that experience.

She spoke of concern over the suggestion that community members could potentially help fill these gaps. Community support is valuable, but extra-curricular leadership in music instruction should not depend on others replacing trained educators. Our students deserve qualified, consistent leadership.

While the district is waiting to see whether enrollment increases as middle school students move up, she would argue that weakening the program now risks discouraging future participation. Strong programs attract students; reduced programs do not. The arts are not extra, they are an important part of student engagement, school culture, and educational excellence. She urged the Board to reconsider this decision.

Chair Deurloo Babcock clarified not all of the stipend performing arts positions are held by the two music teachers who are currently in the building. Many of our performing arts stipend positions have been done by other teachers in the building and other community members. We have been operating that way for years.

Sabrina Ricks, 35 Hood Road, Brookline

Has two children that have gone through HBHS; one graduated Saturday from Keene State with a degree in Theatre and Dance with a concentration in Acting. She would not have been able to pursue her calling if she had not received the education and support of the staff at HBHS. These people are absolutely incredibly important and critical to the development of our children.

The University of Southern California did a study. Neuroscientists there determined that students who receive music instruction develop auditory processing more readily and more thoroughly than students without. We know for a fact that music instruction is critical.

She spoke of a definition that was mentioned but not elaborated on. In 193-E: 2-a, substantive educational content of an adequate education definition specifically states (5) “Arts education, including music and visual arts.”. This is not an after-school program. This is a critical part of our students’ development and education. For us to undercut it in any way or diminish it in any way is a disservice to our students.

Miss Barchard, Brookline

Is a bit more concerned about English and specifically the middle school librarian position. She has interacted with a lot of middle school students this past year as she has interned here to learn how to teach. She has questions about the plan for the library and other positions. Is the district still holding space in the budget for those positions or cutting those positions? She would like more clarification on all of the cuts in the budget and the decisions the Board is making. She understands performing arts is the big focus tonight. She wants to ensure we are also looking at the whole picture. She finds English students in particular are swept under the rug because this is a very science and math heavy school. She wants to ensure students who love English and Band are not forgotten.

Miss Bower, Brookline

Is a senior and a student at the HBHS. She feels the Board and Administration make decisions based on enrollment numbers and feels, from their point of view, that seems reasonable. She disagrees for the sole reason that the band director position cannot be taken over by a choral director. She stated her understanding the individual is stepping down from department chair and will be receiving less pay.

Also, it is extremely unfair. The individual will now be in the choir one day and the band room another. That takes away from choir students as well. This does not just hurt band it hurts the choir program as well. You’re taking the choir director away from where he is needed to an area where he does not have the expertise to do the

service that the band students deserve. She understands band numbers are down, but would urge the Board to reconsider cutting the position entirely. She understands enrollment numbers at the elementary level have exceeded pre-COVID numbers; perhaps an indication that in a few years there will be a flow far greater than can be addressed by one individual.

She would argue the position cannot be taken over by one individual simply based on the amount of work that is put into the band director position itself. She wishes every student that goes into band has the opportunities she was afforded. She does not think she would have gone into band if she knew there would not be a band director in place.

Male Speaker

Thanked the Board for its service. Understands the difficult position with all of the changes coming down from the State. Has a few issues with the decision that has been made. Looking at the numbers, the junior high band has gone down a little, but it is even more pronounced in the high school. A lot of middle school students are not going into band in high school. He believes that to be because of how the course requirements are handled in the high school. A total revamp of it needs to be done. It is not meeting the students where they are. They could be moving requirements from freshman to sophomore, junior or senior year. With band and music, it is something that cannot be interrupted. If you stop taking band in your freshman year there is a high likelihood that you will not return in future years.

He suggested the possibility of adding another period. He is uncertain of requirements around class time, etc. He spoke of the impact of COVID on music.

Expressed a desire for the ability for people to express their viewpoints prior to decisions being made.

Mr. Goodwin, Hollis

Called upon the Board to consider how disenfranchising this is to current performing arts students, and the kind of message it sends to students in the middle and elementary schools. He has spoken with a board member of the elementary school. When you think about the problem with class sizes down there; maybe right now it seems like a good decision to reduce the size of performing arts by reducing the amount of staff in choir and band. What will happen when that influx of students reaches the high school?

He has not been able to find enrollment numbers for the primary schools for music. It really doesn't matter as there is a significant problem with class sizes there. From middle school and high school we have requirements for athletics; we need credits to graduate. In middle school you are required to take a music course. Why is that not a requirement in the high school?

Chair Deurloo Babcock clarified it is the State that creates the requirements for graduation. There is a half credit requirement for a visual and performing arts. There is not an athletic requirement; there is a physical education requirement. She commented on efforts to create flexibility for other electives.

Superintendent Bergskaug commented there is flex P.E. so you could get credit by doing a varsity sport or if you engage in an activity outside of school, e.g., horseback riding, dance, etc. those could be used for the half credit of P.E. to open up the schedule for other electives.

Julie Desmarais, 24 Mill Road, Hollis

Was in band from early elementary school to high school. Her band experiences and instructors, they are indelible in her mind. She had very strong connections with her band directors. While she could not tell a lot of stories about math or other classes, she could stay all evening and tell stories about being in band; all of the challenges and sense of achievement you get from hours and hours of practice. Band is one of those classes that kids will return to year-after-year as it is something they build on and work hard for. They not only work for their own skills but are developing relationships with their peers and band directors.

What we have heard a lot tonight is there is not a lot of interest in these classes. She thinks it is less about that and more about schedule issues. Her own child had to make the choice of putting off their foreign language for the first two years so they could accommodate band and also be responsible and have a study period so that they knew they could get through those first couple of years. Now they are taking that on VLACS. She talked to another parent whose child had to choose between chemistry and band.

It is an impossible choice and not one that is fair. She does not think the same can be said of some of the other electives. Music carries into your adult life. She asked the Board to dig deep and see if there is some other way to accommodate scheduling for those first two years. She understands it is being said that band isn't being taken away, but it is not something you can skip for a year and get back into.

Female Speaker

The mother of two talented musicians ages 10 and 16. Her 16-year-old will be inducted into the Tri-M Music Honor Society tomorrow. She finds it ironic that his induction is following the decision to cut the music staff in half, which will inevitably negatively affect the quality of the program, student experiences and the specialized instruction the performing arts department at the HBHS offers.

She is a speech language pathologist and has worked for 25 years in the schools. She is licensed and certified to treat people of all ages, but her specialty is in school-based work. She would not feel comfortable or effective treating an elderly stroke patient in a hospital despite the fact that she has received graduate level training in this area. In new Hampshire, music educators typically receive an endorsement that covers music education from grades K-12. Despite this broad endorsement, music encompasses many varied specialties including different instruments, disciplines, music types as well as music education that covers different age groups.

A teacher may specialize in choir or strings or theatre. As with many disciplines, teachers are most effective when they practice in their area of expertise. She would not want her student who is learning to play the trombone to receive their music education from a teacher who specializes in voice. Our performing arts department needs and deserves multiple teachers who have varied specialties in order to provide our students with the high-quality music education they deserve. A choir director teaching band would need to understand fingering charts, instrumental techniques that differ from vocal techniques.

Would a choir director be able to troubleshoot a last-minute instrumental problem like a stuck valve right before a performance? Please reconsider reinstating the band director position at the HBHS. Cutting this position sends the community a message that the district is not supportive of a very highly regarded and successful performing arts program. Our students deserve meaningful access to the arts.

Rebecca Shaw

The idea that the students' selection of courses drives everything is kind of misleading. They are ultimately making their choices, but those choices are constrained by what is offered at this time, what they can fit into their schedule that is required, and is that competing with what their elective choices are. She has spoken with several families of 9th grade students, and has been told by a few that their child wanted to take band but they were strongly encouraged or guided to not take it because they needed a study hall or needed to do P.E. first year. Now she is hearing that juniors and seniors with privileges don't have to be on campus. She is questioning the kind of encouragement and guidance that students are getting that they are frontloading their schedules with requirements and pushing out electives that are going to sustain their creativity, their ability to be in school, mental health, and sense of community. Holding that up as it's the students' choice is misleading to some extent. Right now, the HBHS has a functioning esteemed band program with students enrolled in a pipeline coming up from younger grades that does need to be encouraged, that does need to be built up. Programs don't disappear all at once, they erode gradually, and this is a big hit to the program.

First you lose dedicated leadership. You have heard the impact that the individuals in the music department have on the students and that is not replaceable. Taking a beat for the year to see what happens next year you lose one of those vital people. That is not a replicable relationship. That cannot just be substituted for. Mental health is a huge issue in our society, culture, and town. Listen to the kids when they say they need this.

First you lose dedicated leadership then student experience becomes less consistent, enrollment further declines and eventually the program is no longer viable. By that time, it is too late to easily rebuild, and something has been lost.

Music programs depend on continuity, relationships, skilled development over years and on sense of identity within the school. When that continuity is broken, even temporarily, it has a ripple effect that lasts far beyond a single school year. It is very dramatically going to affect the kids now enrolled and what their experience will be for their remaining time here. We are at a point where the program can be saved, preserved by qualified teachers.

Female Speaker

Wished to speak for the band students in attendance and choir students; our Director is great and we would like for the position itself to not be removed. It has helped a lot of us mentally, herself included, and has pushed them forward when having really bad days and even in the best of them. He has been there for them. She believes the generations to follow will be impacted by removal of the band director. Her sister is in 4th grade and happily in band. If this position gets removed she feels her dreams of becoming a great flautist will be pushed into the ground as well as anyone else taking the same path as her.

This is just a reminder that band is important to us and the music department. We really appreciate it. We have come a long way and it is really sad to have it pushed down.

Female Speaker

The decision to cut the band director position has disappointed her beyond words. She took every music class available to her. She would not be the person she is today without it. She is going to audition to Berklee, is pursuing music, is playing 20 different instruments. She would not have done that without this band director position. It is completely unfair to the choral director because it is so much more of a workload that they cannot help the students. The choral director will not be able to help a trombone student who might dent a slide. How are we going to fix that on a show day? The choral director would not be able to help a student get the proper help they need without this position. Removing this position is a huge mistake for the HB community. The band position has given so many a sense of community, a sense of belonging, a safe place to be. Without it, the whole music department will fall apart; maybe not now or in a year, but it will fall apart without proper teaching. Music is extremely important for students. This is disappointing her, other students, and parents and teachers in the HB community.

Vanessa, Brookline

Wished to discuss the importance of sustaining a strong performing arts program. She, along with many parents and community members here tonight has been working extensively since the announcement of this decision to really understand all of the angles. It is helpful to have seen the slideshow and understand where the Board and Administration were coming from. Despite all of that, she believes this is a huge step in the wrong direction for our community. She is a HB Class of 2016 graduate and went to Berklee College of Music in Boston where she studied music therapy. She is now a full-time self-employed voice teacher and music therapist. She could share endless stories of how music has changed her life and the lives of those it touches.

Research consistently shows that music education offered in schools improves students' ability to regulate emotions, cope with challenges, build confidence, cultivate a sense of community and belonging, develop empathy and active listening, improve constructive coping strategies and resolve conflict. According to the American Psychology Association, music provides a safe and supportive environment for healing trauma and building resilience, decreasing depression and anxiety by allowing for emotional release, self-reflection, and positive social interactions including the relationship with the band director or choir director. We are known for being an academically driven school. Research also shows music education's profound impact on brain

development, neuroplasticity, memory, IQ, abstract reasoning and mathematical skills, problem solving, planning, attention to detail, fine motor skills and critical thinking uniting both intellect and emotion.

Maybe you have heard the phrase when words fail music speaks or music is the universal language. This makes me think of the non-verbal student who can miraculously sing or play an instrument fluently or a student who struggles with their mental health and finds an outlet and comfort in music or an isolated student with a challenging home life who lacks community and deals with bullying and yet finds a sense of belonging, collaboration and teamwork with a music class or even a high achieving student who learns how to manage stress and high pressure environments by participating in an ensemble.

Heard talk of having parents from the community volunteering to support the extra-curriculars that the choir and band director take responsibility for outside of school. Last year the New Hampshire Senate Finance Committee voted to defund the State Council on the Arts from \$1.7 million to \$1. That is what is happening in our community and our culture right now. We are devaluing music and the arts. This is not a time to eliminate positions because of numbers. This is time to continue supporting it and to grow it. She would like the district to reconsider class size minimums.

Miranda Bergeron

Graduated HBHS last year. Had only been playing her instrument for a year going into high school. By the time she graduated, she was the first in her State because of the incredible band director and the position. Without the position not only will you not be able to encourage people to do it, but if someone takes a year off it is so much easier to come back or even learn an instrument for the first time knowing there is a director there to teach you the instrument. Personally, she worked a lot with students trying to encourage them to play low brass as we did not have an enormous low brass program. By her senior year she found someone willing to play tuba, however, she did not have the time to teach it to them. Our band director did that during CAVBlock as he has done with many instruments and people in the past.

Believes the music program shaped her as a person, and that she would not have been standing there were not for that. She is currently a student of Chemical Engineering at Wentworth Technical Institute. While she did not decide to pursue music as a career, she believes it very important and has continued on with it. In her music career, she has pursued various leadership roles and is now the treasurer of the largest club on campus, Rensselaer Music Association, because of this role. She has seen other music programs such as the Rensselaer Music Association who have defunded their directors in the past. While they maintained a salary for the position available, they were not able to bring that back. Because of that we are seeing a decrease in especially the jazz music on campus as that is not a part of the curricular music.

With that, she has also seen programs go down in size like this. She has a friend in Connecticut where they have one band director for the high school and middle school, however, their school is less than half the size of ours. They have a robust band program with almost as many people despite the size of the school. She believes this is an issue not with an interest in music but with an encouragement of people doing it and with the support of the people doing it. She does not think this is a great decision.

Natalie

Thanked the Board for welcoming this discussion commenting that this is how real change happens. It was mentioned earlier that there is an honors concert band with 3 members. She is one of the three. She is also an Allstate participant and a member of the Tri-M National Honors Music Society. Just like a lot of the people in the audience, she came here today straight from the rehearsal for the Tri-M concert tomorrow.

Music for her and a lot of people has been more than just the class time and time spent in the class. It is about the opportunities that arise for us. Music has never been about the present it is about what can be. It allows each musician to express their voice. In that way she thinks music is really about the future. She thinks of all of the opportunities she has that she never would have had if it were not for the band director. She is not necessarily concerned about anyone here because they are a strong group, and can carry themselves. She is concerned for future generations. She is scared for the kids the district may be facing in not too long who are struggling because they have not had such access to the music education she has had. She is concerned with mental health issues being on the rise. You can see in the younger generation they struggle with a lot of issues socially and academically. She truly believes music has the power. She has seen how deep its roots run. She comes from a long line of musicians, is a musician herself, and chose to be a musician not because of pressure but because she has seen how it works and the opportunities it can provide.

You can talk about what it will do now and the current solution and how it affects those in this room, but she asks of everyone to please consider future students who need this more than we do.

Chloe Martell, Brookline

Currently a sophomore at the high school and in Honors Choir. Music has completely changed her life for the better. The summer before freshman year was really difficult, and she almost didn't take choir because the class was too big and she couldn't get in. She spoke to the choir director about this being something she wanted to do and they made a spot for her. Questioning the decision to eliminate the position of band director, something she feels is a really bad idea. The choir director now will not only have to direct concert choir, honors choir, concert band, honors concert band, and jazz band, but he has to also to run the music honor society, guitar night, unified music not to mention getting us to and preparing us for things like Allstate, All New England, Jazz All State, the Monadnock Valley Music Festival, and field trips like our previous New Orleans trip. One choir director simply cannot do all of this alone.

This decision is going to spread our teachers thin and decline our quality of education forcing our teachers to become superhuman workaholics, which does not scream number 4 school in the State to her. People move here for the educational opportunities the school offers and watering them down just doesn't seem right.

She understands there is an issue with enrollment, but even offering the position as a part-time job would be better than overworking and underpaying one person to take on all the responsibilities. As the education gets watered down taxes will not. This year we brought four talented musicians to Allstate, a pretty big deal.

Allstate prep takes a lot of help that can only be achieved by someone who knows what they are doing. One person cannot prepare both band and choir students for something like Allstate.

The number of students that participate in band in the elementary and middle schools is larger than those currently in the high school band. What happens if all of them decide to take band in the high school? There is simply no way one person would be able to manage all of these things, especially on a larger scale. The quality of education in music and even in the English department will suffer significantly without a teacher that specializes in those areas. You wouldn't typically make a basketball coach teach baseball because they both have balls so why would a teacher that specializes singing and choir instruct a class that is full of so many different instruments that they might not know how to teach? There are so many incredible musicians in band that will not get the help they need to improve and expand upon their talents.

She remarked if you want to continue to have a thriving band, then I urge you to consider the consequence of your decision.

Jacob Cole

Remarkably, at this school, I have taken Music Theory, Music in American History and Honors Choir. In order to fit these classes into my schedule I had to take a couple of classes on VLACS. I have done several Allstates, every musical, I am currently in Tri-M, and I am the president of the Acapella Club. All of these opportunities were only possible because of not one but two teachers in the music department. The high school schedule is perpetuating this problem. The fact that I had to go to that extent to be able to take music classes shows the lack of priority the school has made music.

It doesn't end with music, the cuts extend to nearly all forms of art offered in this school. I have been taking music all of my life, and I remember watching guitar night as a little kid and wanting to be on that stage one day. I am intending to pursue a career in music and performing arts and it is disappointing to see that there will be less support in my senior year of high school.

Miss Roger, Hollis

I am a student of both directors through Honors Choir, Concert Band and Tri-M as well as Theatre, and I will be the TA for Concert Choir next year. To put into perspective what that looks like in comparison to previous years, my TAs when I was a student in Concert Choir would direct the class when the choral director was absent. Our choral director will be absent more often for not just choir festivals and events but for the band ones as well. I bring it up because that reflects how more than one ensemble is affected by this decision.

I am more than happy to assist that class as it is my choice, however, I would never want to rob someone else of the opportunity to shape young musicians especially someone that is professionally certified to do it. Through the band classes, our director and students play at events such as graduation, sporting events, and playing the National Anthem for such events including pep rallies.

As of next year, what is the minimum amount of students it takes for a performance class to run? The response was 15. Miss Roger continued if you had considered combining Guitar I and Guitar II as one class that makes 13. She wished to put that in perspective.

Female Speaker

Thanked the Board and Administration for providing the information. Talking about class minimums is helpful for her. Looking at a jazz ensemble there is typically a maximum of around 16 students that are accepted. When she auditioned for Honors Jazz Band typically 16 students would be in that class. That is not too high above the current minimum. These ensembles are very different than your typical English class or typical computer science class. They have a lot of different branches that come off of them. As almost a unique program, they should also be addressed in that same way when considering whether they should run.

She has been playing since she was 5 years old. There have been periods of time when she has not wanted to do music. A lot of parents who have tried to push kids into music lessons can agree it is hard to get a little kid to learn an instrument they don't want to learn. Growing up, the biggest determinant on whether or not she went into high school music was middle school. Her middle school experience was right in the middle of COVID. Her 7th and 8th grades were almost completely remote. As someone who lived through that, she saw a huge impact. There were so many less music participants entering high school. She saw almost a cultural approach to the music program in general. People did not want to take music because they were not exposed to that in the middle school years.

When entering her freshman year, played soccer, later joined tennis and many after school clubs that were separate from music. She really became part of the music program in her sophomore year and would say not having had would have been the most detrimental impact on her entire high school career. It has allowed her to

meet kids from the class of 2022 to the class of 2027. It has allowed her to participate in many ensembles, to be Allstate, All New England, etc. She would never have done that or even known about these things if she had not originally joined the concert band and later been exposed to jazz band.

Chair Deurloo Babcock noted the public input period had reached the end of its allotted time. She commented wishing everyone to have the opportunity to speak, she would ask the Board for a motion to extend the time period.

**MOTION BY MEMBER WILLIAMS TO EXTEND THE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD TO ALLOW THOSE STANDING IN LINE TO PROVIDE INPUT
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANN**

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

Yea: Cindy VanCoughnett, Amy Kellner, Rob Mann, Kate Stoll, Holly Deurloo Babcock
5
Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

Member Solon Abstained

Mr. LaFlamme, Hollis

If you talked to freshman him and told him that he would be not just a member of the honors level jazz band but also the honors choir, the Acapella group, vice president of the Tri-M Music Honor Society as well as being a top scoring instrumentalist in 3 different categories, he would not believe you. Going into high school, he had very little interest in music. It was the band program that not only sparked this interest, but kept it going. It was not just the program, but the program that coincided with the choir program being directed by two different people.

His concern, as well as that of many other top scoring instrumentalists here, that by combining these two positions into a single individual, there will be some aspects that the individual will not be able to do that an instrumental director would be able to and others that the individual can. One individual may not have the bandwidth to be able to be at all of the required events. For some of the events such as classical jazz and modern band Allstate, you need someone as a chaperone who understands how the festivals work and to help and motivate students to attend. It is not something that any chaperone can go to. Our school has consistently, for the past five years, had at least one top scoring instrumentalist be number one in the State in that category.

He wished to mention that because of the band director position, he was pushed to play an instrument that he had never heard of, but that he was scared of because it was taller than him. Because he was constantly pushed to go for this, it has changed the path of his life for the better.

Male Speaker

Having received a tip that he should be listening to what was being discussed at this meeting in real time, and hearing some of the discussion, he felt it necessary to get here and provide comment. Something he did hear mentioned was how much of a struggle it was to try to get the budget passed at the last annual meeting. Speaking as someone who strongly advocates for supporting our students and getting the budget passed, hearing that these are the kinds of cuts that are happening after fighting so hard to get the budget approved is very disappointing. Come next cycle, if these kinds of cuts have to be made even when we get the budget approved, it will be very difficult to rally support to get a future budget passed.

If the sentiment of the voters is something that is concerning the Board, he would suggest you don't do anything this rash now. If you really think we don't need a band director then propose a budget without it, and he will amend it, add the necessary funding to reinstate the band director, and we will have that body vote on it. He is pretty confident that the Town would support it.

Male Speaker

Feels things are a bit ironic and confusing. The forecast presented for student enrollment when at town and district meetings is always increasing numbers when talking about teacher contracts, administrative staff, and buildings and facilities. Tonight, I heard that there are steady class sizes.

Chair Deurloo Babcock stated the NESDEC forecast changed. They traditionally have been saying that enrollment would increase in the next few years. That changed this year.

The male speaker continued by commenting that historically, those forecasts are always pretty interesting as to where they end up.

Chair Deurloo Babcock commented that the Board agrees 100%.

The male speaker continued; during the meetings, the forecasts have expressed a steep climb and the need to spend lots of money. Tonight is kind of a startling message to hear something different.

He also may not understand the two different charts that were presented. On the 25-26 numbers for Concert Band and Honors Choir the total number was 24. You have 31 in there for 26-27. That seems like a 30% increase not a decrease. The Jazz Band and Honors Jazz 25-26 number was 10 and for 26-27 it is 17. That is a 70% increase. He heard that the numbers are declining but the numbers presented may contradict that.

We voted on a budget and now the requirements are changing. If going to cut staff he would like to see some publication/information on taxpayer dollars committed for those positions that are not going to be used for that.

The arts are not just about the arts. Students learn a lot more than just playing a musical instrument or singing a song. I have two children who pursued arts, and when mentioning to one of them that he was attending this meeting, they spoke of knowing many young adults who graduated from programs in this school district that are making a living in bands, playing on Broadway, etc. They are crushing it and would not be there without the program.

He encouraged Board members, as seriously considering this, to take a week where they don't listen to any music and see how empty life is.

Karen Belmonte, 46 Truell Road, Hollis

Asked if the Board ever considered surveying students that go to charter schools or are taking their EFA funds? She has taken two kids out of district to charter schools, and brought one back. She does not recall having a survey. She is aware students fill out forms for VLACS classes. She asked if that data is being compiled so that it can be viewed from an enrollment standpoint.

Asked if hiring a part-time band direction with an appropriate experience level was ever fully considered. Based on enrollment requests it appears there is sufficient student interest to support these courses. In fact, district policy allows certain classes to be intentionally small. Shouldn't performing arts classes, where

individualized instruction is essential, fall into this category? For example, a guitar class with 9 students is not excessive, it is appropriate. Based on that, the math is not adding up for her. According to Ed 503 your teachers are allowed to have minor assignments that are less than 50% of their courseload. If you have a choral director that is the head of the department that is 4 classes meaning he can have one class that is not a music class. Your other full-time employee could have two classes and be under 50% meaning that we need 6 credits in music classes. If you take your policy about some courses being left intentionally small, you let guitar run at 9 students, improv at 9 students, now you have 2 band credits, 2 course credits, a unified arts credit, and guitar and improv bring it up to 6.

She is hearing that there was no choice, but she is not fully understanding that. She wished for clarification of the remark that we are flagged for compliance; do we get flagged if teachers have minor assignments? When she looked up our band director on the DOE's website it said he was endorsed for personal finance.

Female Speaker

Last year was her first year in public school during which she took choir and fell in love with it. She is currently a freshman at the high school. She does not have a band teacher as a teacher, has the choir director. She cannot relate to losing a beloved teacher, but cannot imagine losing such a significant mentor to the students. In the past week alone, she has gone to her choir director because, when at school, he is her safe space, a place where she can express what is on her mind. Her choir teacher is like a family member to her, not just a teacher. Being part of the choir class has given her the chance to try things she never would have thought of before like the Monadnock Valley Music Festival. Her best friend has the band director as a teacher and she has heard firsthand how much of an impact he has had on her although having only been a part of her life for around 9 months.

The thought of losing her choir director leaves her feeling lost because of the impact he has had on her life. This leads her to wonder how long we have before the choir director is replaced by an English or P.E. teacher.

John Ricks, 35 Hood Road, Brookline

Our son has been truly impacted by the Performing Arts Department in the high school. His inclusion in the student body outside of the confined classroom began in unified music and continued over the past five years in performing arts. Inclusion benefits not just him but the neurotypical students whose lives he touches. Inclusivity of the performing arts department is also a legal issue. Our son or any special needs child cannot be legally excluded from any school sponsored activities. Reducing staffing to a single educator for music will make it virtually impossible for true and complete access to be ethically viable for these children to the performing arts. Having just two educators feels minimal given the enormity of the responsibilities they carry. Cutting the program in half is simply unacceptable.

It feels like an afterthought on the part of the administration in spite of the weak explanations we heard today. We pay ridiculously high taxes in Hollis and Brookline, and our school programming should reflect an exemplary educational opportunity for our students and one of which we the residents and parents and taxpayers approve.

I can guarantee that our voices heard today will be heard again when we vote for our school board members in the next election.

He is a student of music. When he was in middle school, high school, and college he was guided by focused, passionate, dedicated, instrumental educators; people whose lives were that music. It caused him to be able to

excel. The most important thing he learned is that music is the language of the soul. It guided him and guides everyone here.

Female Speaker

She did not go to the public-school program here during middle school, but when high school came around, although she was accepted to Bishop Guertin and the Academy of Science and Design, she decided to come back to the public-school program because of how strong the band program is. While she understands it was emphasized we are not losing the band program itself, this decision will eventually cause great turmoil to the current choral director taking on the role of two people as well as the students and the quality of the program. She is personally affected as a junior. Next year is the final year of high school for her class. Any of her class wishing to go further into music in college, Broadway or other professional positions, because of this decision, are losing someone they are very close with and may have wanted advice from.

Scheduling is one of her great concerns. This past school year she wanted to take an honors English class, but because she was committed to her music and wanted to take Honors Choir and Concert Band, she was forced to take the only other equivalent weighted Honors English class, which was AP Language. That ended up being way too much for her schedule, which significantly impacted her mental health. Despite that, she continued with her music commitments because that is what she feels safe and at home with.

In Freshman year, she gave up her spot on varsity lacrosse because she loves music so much. She thinks that speaks to how the students at HB have such a great immense level of commitment to music. She believes removing this position is a short-sighted reaction to a larger problem at hand especially with the scheduling process as well as forcing students to take certain requirements during their freshman year instead of distributing it throughout their high school career.

Rod Ferland, 50 Van Dyke Road, Hollis

Is 83 years old. He went to parochial school like many people in Nashua and Manchester with the nuns. He was in French half the day. No music really except that he was in the boys choir singing the masses with the men's choir, the Sopranos. Every day they would walk home at lunchtime would hit the notes and learn our carols in French. It was a different time. We didn't have band at the high school. We went from kindergarten to 8th grade and then to the public high school. When he was in 5th or 6th grade they added a position at the high school of band director.

All of the kids at the parochial school went to see the sister superior and had an assembly at the school to hear a man play the saxophone. He thought he would like to play the saxophone. That is how it started. He has played in Boston shows; all the way from Ray Charles to so many others.

Chair Deurloo Babcock remarked you have had an incredible career and incredible impact on this program.

Mr. Ferland continued by stating when he was 17 years old he went to college and had band rehearsal and heard a flute player. After 4 years they married at 21 and had 2 children who grew up here in Hollis. They moved to Hollis in 1973. He would drive to Massachusetts for his first job. It was a school system that had orchestra, band, large chorus, and he was the teacher to start all the kids in 5th grade (4 elementary schools). He went to all of the elementary schools and started all of the students. If there were 10 kids in a class he would take all of the instruments.

Chair Deurloo Babcock stated appreciation for everything he has done.

Female Speaker, Hollis

Thanked the Board for its work and spoke of understanding the Board is in a difficult situation. She was a student at the HB school district, graduated in 2020, and was awarded the Excellence in Theatre Studies Award. She played flute in the band, sang in the jazz choir, did the acting class and dancing movement class, did the after-school theatre program, etc. She did not set out to take all of those classes, but was often bored during the encouraged study periods and the open-door policy of the band and choir classes let her and many others take refuge from the struggles of life in these classrooms. That resulted in the desire to join them. She was lucky because her schedule allowed for such changes primarily due to taking AP classes in place of traditional classes that would have severely limited her involvement in the arts.

These communities support various outreach options. Learning flute gave her the skills to give back to her community. She played at various events to provide live music throughout Hollis and Brookline and connect with the broader community, which is a fraction of the community involvement that the jazz band does.

She understands specific classes such as acting and improv are not everyone's cup of tea, however, from the perspective of someone who has done both band and choir, she can say firsthand that they are completely separate skills. This is no offense to the choir teacher, but it is completely different learning from someone who can do it and someone who loves what they do and has done it every day for years. I encourage you to think of the students who rely on their instrumental skills for scholarships and others to resume building needed during their education and these formative and impactful years. Additionally, as much as I appreciate our English teachers, there is a strong differentiation from understanding literary text and the physical movement and background needed to bring that text to life.

I have been involved in great productions at HB and I encourage you not to limit our students due to limited budgets.

Sid Harris, Foxborough, MA

Asked, he stated he is not a resident of the district.

Chair Deurloo Babcock noted the public input period is intended for residents. The Board was permitting alumni to speak, but there really was not time to allow non-residents to provide input.

Mr. Harris stated he teaches some of the students. Asked to clarify, he indicated he is on faculty at MIT and wished to speak.

Chair Deurloo Babcock suggested, following the meeting, he could provide comments through email that could be shared.

Outcry from the audience became too loud for the Chair to be heard.

Chair Deurloo Babcock stated the Board has tried really hard to be very respectful, has listened to each speaker's input, but this is a meeting of the district's school board. The people who pay taxes in this community are the voters in this community. We generally do not let non-residents speak. She will allow it after everyone else has had the opportunity to speak.

A member of the audience spoke out without being recognized or coming to the microphone.

Member Mann called for a Point of Order.

Cassie Ricks, 35 Hood Road, Brookline

Is an alumni of HB from the class of 2021 and was also given the award for Excellence in Theatre Studies. She won't pretend to know the nitty gritty of how the school manages their finances nor how the school administration is organized in general or how things have changed since she graduated. However, would say that in her time as a student of the arts, has observed how public and liberal arts schools very often prioritize funding allocation of athletic programs over visual and performing arts and even over quality of life and infrastructure expenses.

A significant memory from her time at HB is having to evacuate the building and go home early as well as miss the next school day because of a plumbing issue. She remembers speaking with peers later in that year about the reported excess in funding that the School Board was deciding what to do with. Would the funding go towards replacing and repairing the septic system, the old water fountains, would the young men finally have urinal walls in the bathrooms, would the performing arts department get a boost in funding that year? She was baffled when the funding went towards constructing the astro turf field behind the school.

This past school year the expense and revenue reports stated that just over \$1 million in expenses was allocated towards the co-curricular program, which is defined in the report as the athletic program and other co-curricular activities. The report did not detail how much of this money went to each program, which makes her wonder just how much was allocated to the performing arts department compared to HBs extensive athletic program and disregarding the enrollment policy if the budget cuts could have been directed differently.

Abby Pertelli-Carr, 1852 Sanford Road, Wells Maine

Was in the HB school system K-12 and graduated in 2017. She drove in about two hours tonight. She works full-time in the music field because of the music program she was able to experience here at HB. HB has long been a legacy school district leading the way in offering a quality music and performing arts education in New England. It carries a kind of heritage not all are aware of; being a leading district in preparing young people like her for successful music careers representing the top Allstate band and choir scores in the State, winning international competitions, creating in students and their families a lifelong passion for music and providing the kind of social and emotional support our youth need in their developmental years.

The alumni base that has come out of the HB music department is unparalleled. We are still experiencing the benefits from a community that prioritized the arts over multiple generations. Her peers from HB have won grammies, have competed on the Voice, have full-time careers on Broadway, are recording artists, working in the media business, music production, perform professionally all around the world, and have continued carrying the torch as music educators.

She would have to say a lot more HB alum have pursued professional music careers successfully than athletic careers. When she entered the music department, she had little musical skill and when exiting was admitted into every top music college program in the country not because of one music teacher but because of two. She had two choir teachers and one band teacher and that diversity actually helped her success with college. Last year when she performed at Carnegie Hall she had to contact her band director to thank him for pouring into her for so long in high school.

Just noticed that every genre of courses from mathematics to English has a requirement of participation for graduation at HB and the only remaining area that does not require participation or half a credit is shared and split and making people choose between visual arts and music. She would say the solution here is to require one music course for graduation and one visual arts class for graduation.

Katrine Dickau, 125 Rocky Pond Road, Hollis

Music is a part of this community. It will take a community and all of us working together to try and make sense of this and work toward something that will work for everybody.

She represented the New Hampshire Music Educators Association with a letter they wrote specifically to Superintendent Bergskaug:

“I write to you today on behalf of the New Hampshire Music Educators’ Association, which represents over 400 music educators, collegiate members, and the many communities in which we work. I implore you to reconsider the value of music education to your students, school district, and community.

It is imperative that a comprehensive and sequential music education be offered to all K-12 students. Studies showing the link between engagement in music and academic achievement is a small part of a much bigger picture. Music shapes the way our students understand themselves and the world around them. It fosters many 21st Century skills such as creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking. These skills are in high demand for today’s workforce and will significantly improve a person’s day-to-day interactions within their community.

Music education has a demonstrable positive impact on learning and has been shown to transcend socioeconomic levels. A study published in the Journal of Research in Music Education found that students in high-quality music programs score higher on standardized tests compared to students in schools with deficient music education programs regardless of the socioeconomic level of the school or school district.”

Female Speaker, Hollis

Is concerned. When talking about education, it is not only about the enrollment number, it is the quality. When talking about quality, one of the slides showed we are losing students because some go to other ASDs and some are homeschooled. However, some of the students come back from those to our high school; because they are picking a high quality of education. They are picking the school that can provide more of a chance to develop. At home, or at ASD, perhaps they can obtain a little bit of a better education, but it does not have the sports team or a good band. Here, we have good students and a good community. We have the parents to support us so we have a very good band here at HBHS.

Talking about the numbers presented here in the charts and that the size of the class should be 10 or 15 students for band. Her answer is no. In her opinion a class, if learning something like English, perhaps needs to be a large size, but they are only like 3 or 4 instruments. Maybe they can combine the band. They can give very good performances showing the community and our students and our families. That is showing the quality. Quality is very important.

Regarding the teacher you are saying we go from two and still have the one. No, one is not enough. One can cover this course. If he wants to pick up a new thing and cover the band its very difficult. It is not like you are following a recipe for cooking, it’s a totally different thing.

She suggested consideration be given to the organization and their voices.

Male Speaker, Broad Street, Hollis

There have been a lot of things covered; the high taxes and great school system, how important music is, but it is how important the right person is to fit the right position. Spoke of being certain we all have the one person in our lives we clicked with and who pointed us in the right direction. Today we have the right person in the right place guiding these students in the right direction.

He spoke of having tried to teach his child a single instrument. They took him to classes, etc. Since starting in the band, he has started learning four different instruments. This is something. Just because of a couple of dollars difference, don't lose the right person you have in hand.

I know how difficult it is working with the numbers, but I'm sure there is a way to make it happen. The right thing is to make it happen. I would not lose the right person in hand with the right skills and right attitude and they are doing the right things. I would do everything possible to keep that person. Don't lose it just because of one year. Don't forget there are more kids coming in the future.

Female Speaker, Brookline

We have talked tonight about how the cut of this position is going to affect kids outside of this band. I want to talk about that. We see this microphone I'm talking into and the ones you are talking into and the speakers that are set up. At the high school, for our choir and band programs, the students set those up. The students run those during the concerts and even diminishing the programs is going to diminish these opportunities for the students.

The other thing I would like to point out is the fact that we will not have the acting classes next year. Acting I and Acting II were the two classes that she was able to find her niche in through our scheduled curriculum outside of the extra-curricular activities. She thinks it vitally important that students have these opportunities and that they are taught by teachers who have the niches to teach them, e.g., someone who specializes in vocals won't be as effective as a trained band leader. Having an English teacher who is great at understanding the context of text and is fantastic at teaching AP literature is not going to be able to teach acting and improv as effectively as a person who has directed the actual production before.

Female Speaker, Hollis

I don't have numbers or statistics or any crazy percentages, but I do have experience. Before I came to HB I was from a much lower funded school district. I have seen firsthand what happens when you don't prioritize the arts and what happens when you just put it under the table. It is ridiculous to hear it, but little steps like this, things like removing just one position have a domino effect. It will keep getting worse and is only a temporary solution.

She is a senior, is leaving this year, and has had such a positive experience here. Her little sister is 11 years old and already showing a lot of interest in band. She has come to some of her concerts, and is gushing over being an instrumentalist and the amazing things she has seen on stage as well as the very supportive staff members that have helped me and my friends. She does not how to tell her that by the time she gets to high school she might not have that same amount of support.

She wished to put in perspective how it affects people and future generations and request the Board do more than just reconsider.

Female Speaker

When I heard this news my first reaction was to respond to the few things that you basically disclosed meaning budget and enrollment. I looked into the budget. I was looking at cost differently just to see what the percentage is in the base of a \$33 million budget, and also what the cost of a band director position means to this \$33 million budget. There is so little significance to the reduction in the budget that is insignificant. If you do this and next year you look at having done this and realize it made no difference, what message are you sending? From that point of view, number-wise it makes no sense.

In terms of enrollment, is it that students don't have interest in band or guitar or is there something else behind it? It is actually like what a lot of them said, it's the schedule; are they able to take it? Have they been encouraged to take it or are freshmen and sophomores coming into the school and encouraged to do so many of these credits prior to graduation? My daughter's schedule is appalling to me.

She was asked to take so many APs. The school was like we'll just let you decide, you don't have to take it. Think about that; you tell a kid who is 16 to think about it when they are recommended for a very difficult class, are they going to think about it? No, they are going to take it. If you tell them they can do it they will do it. Band, choir, those things help them. They go to these teachers and ask for help. They don't go to some random person and pour their hearts out. These people in band, choir, and performing arts, they are very special.

Stop pushing the kids to take all of these very hard classes because when the requirement goes in Ed 306.23 you need to think about the scheduling. Some of the schools are doing blocks, maybe hybrid blocks. You have the experience. Maybe you increase your credits. You already have enough, then add another 1.5 because of the State requirement then you are squeezing yourself. You need to think outside of the box.

Sid Harris, Foxborough, MA

I do work with the New England Conservatory of Music, the Longy School of Music Ensemble. I've been on the faculty at MIT for 25 years. I work with admissions at MIT. Among the qualities often found in admitted students, leadership; seen on display tonight, community service, instrumental and vocal music education.

Thirty-five percent of MIT students are involved in music classes. The scheduling issue talked about is huge and I think that is the root of this issue. There are other towns that have grappled with this and are struggling, but they are working on it. It has got to be addressed because if it is not you're throwing out something that UNH, MIT, Framingham State College, Plymouth State College are saying they are interested in. They are interested in well-rounded students. They are interested in students who have arts experience.

Budget cuts are challenging. You're doing a great job, but they bring any institution's core values to the foreground. Particularly since the pandemic, many school districts have put wellness at the top of their core values. Research has proven that the arts, particularly music, where students study and perform, particularly in ensembles, embodies both intellectual and creative vigor and space for reflection and inner growth and development. I know you say everybody knows this, but do we put our money where our mouth is because if we're really concerned about wellness, well look at the display tonight. Every two years I invite MIT alumni back to campus to perform with current students. The vast majority repeatedly tell me that playing in ensembles while students at MIT was among the most important educational experiences they had at MIT, and that it got them through the rigors of the overall curriculum.

In a town not far from here this exact decision was made and that program has now disappeared. Just as a warning everything that people have talked about is true.

The public input period was declared closed at 8:27 p.m.

Chair Deurloo Babcock stated normally the Board would not comment, and would just move on with its meeting. She would give the Board an opportunity to speak, but there would not be answers today for any of the questions. As a Board, that is not how they operate. We have other items on the agenda. The Board truly appreciates the input provided.

Member Kellner thanked those who provided feedback, particularly the students. She knows it is not easy to get in front of everyone and speak. It means even more for her to hear from the students as that is why the Board is here.

Three quick thoughts; wished to stress to the Board and Administration that it is always important to her, no matter how big or small a decision is, that we put information out to the community ahead of time so we can get feedback. She does understand the timeline and our Administration was in an incredibly difficult position because of the time structure, but she knows we can do better. Our community is a big community with a lot of great ideas so we need to get that feedback ahead of decisions being made.

Second, year after year we stress how important it is that every single student that is in our district has at least one adult they can connect with. We try to facilitate this with things like ROCK and Advisory and we try our best to do that. We all know that the connections that are so meaningful happen best organically and by meeting with staff and teachers. We do the best we can to help encourage it. In this department, we are really cutting that connection in half. That is a big concern for her. She will always care so much more about the social emotional health than State standardized testing. If we don't have good mental health, social emotional, everything else will fall by the wayside.

The last thing is she thinks the first speaker might have said it best, one of her biggest concerns is making cuts. Tearing down a program is always going to cost more to rebuild. She does not want to in any way imply that this is an easy decision. As a mom, taxpayer, Board member she hopes our Administration can take another look at this.

Member Mann commented we received a lot of input. He did not hear one person go to the microphone and say yeah let's cut it. Not one. He can also say that there wasn't one thing said that he disagreed with. He is also a recipient of a music education. He would like to have this Board take a second look at this and see if there are other options we could investigate. He does not think there will be an answer tonight or in the next few meetings, but he would like to spend a little more time on this.

Member Solon commented from what he is able to hear and what he has heard of the conversation, everyone is in violent agreement that we should not cut anything programmatic. From his understanding of the proposals that we have been given by the Administration there are no programmatic cuts proposed in this upcoming year. What he heard is that there are staffing adjustments being made in multiple departments and that there are some courses, not just in music, that may be underenrolled and paused for a semester or a year. He wants to make sure that we are addressing the real impact of any of the decisions being made, and find out if his understanding is clear that programmatically we are not making any cuts, that the course of studies is not changing, and that it is an enrollment issue. Hearing what Member Mann has said, he agrees with much and thinks the place the Board really has to look is if we value the arts program so much why are they decreasing and is there anything within our control to increase interest level? He heard speakers talk about perhaps it can happen at the guidance stage. He is unsure. He thinks that is a separate issue independent of what is being considered tonight.

Chair Deurloo Babcock thanked those in attendance for coming out and for fighting for our students. She would love to see them at more meetings fighting for our students. We have not heard anyone doing that in a long time. We have been sitting at meeting after meeting hearing over and over and over again how we are driving the budget up. When saying our budget passed with a lower threshold, it passed with 9 votes. Nine

votes, and the budget would have failed. That is very important information. We cannot keep doing this. We want to have everything for our students, but we don't hear from you in other times. That is one of the problems. It is so important for us to know this because all of us here agree with you and feel it and believe it. We do, but we have not been hearing it and we haven't been seeing it and we have been berated for what we do for the students. We want to do what you want. She cannot make any promises. We can look at this petition that should be submitted to the Board so that we can actually have it in front of us and can work on some of those things. She is not promising you will get exactly what you want, but she can say we will look at things, will have more conversations and we encourage you to keep coming to our meetings.

She noted the Board would be discussing the Class Size policy in about an hour. That is an important piece to this. Our class size policy is what is driving a lot of this and we are recommending changes to decrease the number of students in a minimum and maximum class. We are making those suggestions tonight, but if you don't come back other people will come in and tell us not to do that. We need your support.

Member Janine Williams departed at 8:38 p.m.

*There being no objection, the Board took a five-minute recess at 8:40 p.m.
The Board reconvened at 8:45 p.m.*

PRINCIPAL AND ATHLETIC REPORTS

Athletics

Principal Hess highlighted items included in the report, which was provided as part of the [agenda](#) packet including standings for the various teams at both the middle and high school, e.g., at the time the report was written, the baseball team was undefeated and tied for first place, the boys tennis team is in 2nd place with only one loss, and the middle school baseball team is also undefeated, sitting in 1st place of their Tri County standings.

In an effort to promote professional development opportunities for our coaches, the Athletic Department has formed a partnership with a group called Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA), that will be providing workshops on a regular basis throughout a given school year.

Our annual HBHS End of Year Sports Awards will be taking place on Monday, June 15th at 6:00 p.m. in the HBHS Auditorium.

With all head coaching positions filled, preseason meetings will be occurring over the coming weeks, try-out schedules are being finalized, and Fall sports registrations are slated to open via ArbiterSports at both schools on Monday, June 1st.

The Hollis Brookline Athletic Department is proud to announce that this year there were 14 student-athletes that were recognized at the annual NHIAA/NHADA Scholar Athlete Ceremony at the Capitol Center for the Arts on Wednesday, April 1st. These student-athletes must have lettered in 2 sports during each year of their high school career, maintain a B+ average or better, and have participated in community service of some kind. This truly is a tremendous accomplishment, and we are honored to have been able to recognize them for their achievements.

Chair Deurloo Babcock extended congratulations to those students who are working very hard in sports and those who received the NHIAA/NHADA scholar athlete award.

HBMS

Patrick West, Principal, Hollis Brookline Middle School, spoke of the Washington DC trip which 168 students participated in. The trip was a tremendous success. Students represented the HB community extremely well. He expressed gratitude to all involved.

The middle school had the privilege of hosting Kati Preston, a Holocaust survivor, author, and New Hampshire resident, on April 24, 2026. Ms. Preston, who was instrumental in the passage of New Hampshire legislation requiring Holocaust education in public schools, spoke to students and staff about her firsthand experiences and the importance of remembrance, resilience, and education.

Congratulations to 7th grade Science teacher, Clare Delay, who presented to a panel of judges on May 7th as part of the semi-finalist round for New Hampshire Teacher of the Year. Ms. Delay's presentation focused on her vision for developing a statewide database that would enable middle school students to collect, share, connect, and analyze data from their local communities. Unfortunately, she did not make it to the finalist round, but her presentation really spoke to her as an educator.

Included with the report were the course request numbers and course average projections for the 2026-2027 school year.

The NHSAS testing is occurring this week. The opt-out number is up to 11 for 7th grade and 4 for 8th grade. Our total student population is 375. The 5% is 17.85 total opt-outs. We are under that number.

Chair Deurloo Babcock congratulated Clare Delay on being a semi-finalist. She also congratulated Principal West and his team of chaperones for getting all those children to and home from DC.

She wished to comment that the reason it is important that we pay attention to opt-outs is because if we go beyond the 5% those students go into our state testing as a zero. When you have too many go in as a zero it changes the test scores. We have had a lot of conversation about test scores in the past year and a half and a lot of pressure from the public about our test scores. It is very valuable for people to understand that we are now reporting on opt-outs and why.

Principal West spoke to the course request numbers stating much different than how the master schedule is developed at the high school, most of the classes are prescribed. Students have the opportunity to elect band, which is band, chorus or general music, and then they can choose a world language or a reading class. Then they have a choice within their math options. Everything else is pretty much prescribed with the exception of some individualized programming based on 504s and IEPs.

For next year, the projection, at this time, is 175 seventh-grade students and 173 eighth-grade students. These are the lowest numbers he has had at the middle school. It looks like numbers will be coming back up in the next year.

All of the prescribed classes, e.g., Social Studies, Science, English, Specials, Arts, Technology, and Computer, pretty much every student does take. Teachers have 5 classes/sections. When we take 175 divided by 10 that rounds up to 18 per class. That is our average class size for the core classes (outside of Math).

Band 7 has 35 requests; looking at running 2 sections. Band 8 (24); looking at running two sections. Chorus 7 (53 requests), Chorus 8 (30), General Music 7 (52) and General Music 8 (54).

What his administrative team and he does is look at all of the requests being mindful of teacher contracts and the Collective Bargaining Agreement language and try to create sections that are within the policy range numbers but still honoring the five teaching classes that our teachers are expected to teach.

Moving on to World Language, we have French 7 (28 requests), French 8 (42), Spanish 7 (74), and Spanish 8 (54). We have two Spanish and 1 French teacher. Those suggested sections are broken up to try and keep those class sizes low, but within Board policy.

Moving on to Math, we have Math 6 (65 requests), Math 7 Algebra (17), Math 7 Pre-Algebra (56), Math 8 (52), Math 8 Algebra (49), Geometry (16), and IMP (14). IMP is really based off of student IEPs and individualized math placement.

Reading classes include Read 180 (3), Reading 7 (39), Reading 8 (22), and Specialized Reading (12). Those numbers are pretty standard as is. The Administrator and the Special Education Administrator and he try and look at the class requests and adjust suggested sections to fall within Board policy, but those are classes that fall within the section we run because they are based mostly off of student IEPs and student need.

Every student has access to P.E., Social Studies, English, and Science and the specials. It is looking like the average class size for those will be 18. The way the schedule works, some classes end up a little more and others a little less based on how the schedule develops.

Chair Deurloo Babcock remarked it is very straightforward, but the numbers are low. It sounds like the projections say that the numbers will increase, but we have seen projections change. They are lower numbers than what we are used to seeing at the middle school, and the team approach definitely restricts it.

HBHS

The weekend of April 18th we had our AERA Allstate competition. This is a culmination of months of preparation and a weekend of learning that culminates with a performance at the Capital Center for the Arts. There were 6 students that made it in bands, choir and orchestra. Congratulations to all of them for that fantastic showing.

Our “We The People” team, consisting of Jackson Adams, Edward Al Banna, John Constantine, Ben Hajduk, and Arielle Tasto (along with teachers/chaperones Trevor Duval and Christina Ellis Ehram) competed in the National Competition in Washington D.C. Although they did not walk away with any awards this year, the effort that these 5 young people put into their work is far beyond commendable.

For the second year in a row, our FIRST Robotics Team 1073 attended the World Championships in Houston, Texas from April 29th - May 2nd. The team competed well and won the Quality Award, which is described as celebrating machine robustness in concept and fabrication. Building the robot is only part of their success and the judges recognize them as a quality example to others.

Over Spring Break, 64 students and 15 adults/chaperones traveled to the United Kingdom. Over 10 days, they traveled through Ireland, Scotland, and England. We learned about the history of Dublin and the division and troubles in Derry. We saw the beauty of the Giant’s Causeway and the remnants of 25 years of civil unrest between the Catholics and Protestants. We also learned how to dance and sing some traditional Irish tunes and steps. We saw castles, museums, and the beautiful coastlines of Scotland; from big cities to small towns. Finally, we wrapped up in London with Windsor castle, and downtown London.

Our SAT and NHSAS opt-out numbers; for the SAT we had 155 students test and 31 opt-outs, which is 16%. For NHSAS, up to this point have had 113 students test. The window is still open. At this point we have had 54 opt-outs, which is 29%.

Our very own Dan Bumbarger has been named one of the New England Association For College Admission Counseling (NEACAC) Professionals of the Year! Here is what is said about the recognition: The NEACAC Professional of the Year Award identifies several individuals from all 6 New England states whose contributions to the field of college admission and counseling deserve such recognition. This award honors NEACAC members across the profession, including those affiliated with colleges and universities, high schools, independent counselors and community-based organizations. Award recipients are strong and ethical advocates for students and/or their institutions and have a proven record of accomplishment throughout their careers. They demonstrate honesty, patience, thoroughness, and sensitivity in their work with students, parents, and colleagues. They are mentors, leaders, and consummate professionals. Dan will receive his award at a ceremony next month at Boston College.

The Senior class overnight white-water rafting trip is updated with a trip proposal.

A counter proposal for something we are looking to do next year; timing structures with Advisory and CAV Block. Currently, our Advisory runs 15 minutes three times/week, butted right up against our CAV Block that is about 44 minutes kind of split into two sections. What we are looking to do, based upon feedback from staff and students and seeing how things are working, is to propose moving Advisory to Mondays and Fridays for 25 minutes total on those days with CAV Block then running Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursdays. He sees these two things working hand in hand to support each other.

Advisory is our way to still do connections, check in with students, do our activities, theme months, etc. but also, as a way to set up what the supports look like in CAV Block throughout the rest of the week. CAV Block going to one 40-minute block reduces transitions in the hallways, still allows time for students to make up exams, to meet up with teachers if they have to or if they need to do 40 minutes in the gym that option is always there as well.

This change also kind of removes the block of Advisory CAV Block in lunch. That is a really long section of time that is non-academic sometimes for students. This kind of breaks that up as well, but still allows us to support students academically and socially emotionally throughout the week. It gives a few minutes of instructional time back to teachers as well because we are reducing, by a few minutes, some transition time.

Noted were upcoming events. The last day of class for Seniors is Friday, May 29th. Graduation is Saturday, June 6th, at 10:00 a.m.!

Our last day of school for students is June 16, 2026, and the last day for staff is June 18, 2026.

Chair Deurloo Babcock congratulated the All-State winners, We The People and First Robotics participants, and Mr. Bumbarger.

Principal Hess commented one of the interesting things about his first year as the Principal here was the opportunity it provided for him to look at what is happening, what is and is not working from an outsiders' point of view. We had our New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) visit this year, which gave him a great opportunity to learn. We have had some great conversations about Program of Studies, enrollment numbers, etc.

He has two things he is looking to explore as we move into next year. The first is the desire to, under the Committee of Curriculum & Best Practices, start a sub-committee that will focus on the exploration of performing arts at HBHS. He would like to include Board members, himself or the Assistant Principal who oversees the department, students and community members. He wants to look at what is and is not working, the POS and the changes made over the years, and start talking and asking those questions about why we are seeing the drop of enrollment from the middle to high school, with an overall goal of seeing what systems or structures we can put in place to strengthen and support our music and performing arts program.

Because everything he has looked at this year is kind of like an onion (layers), he also wants to start up the Scheduling Committee again at the high school and look at if one of the issues we are seeing is dealing with our current schedule and starting some conversations around that for the next school year.

Chair Deurloo Babcock responded that is great. We can put both of those items on the agenda for next month, and will take some public input on that.

Superintendent Bergskaug requested the discussion be expanded to Visual and Performing Arts.

Chair Deurloo Babcock questioned if Board approval would be needed for the Advisory/CAV Block change. Superintendent Bergskaug responded that historically the Board has voted on such a change. Chair Deurloo Babcock stated that too would be placed on the next agenda, and requested the ability to compare the current schedule to next year's schedule.

DISCUSSION

- Revenue/Expense Report

In Regular Education, savings were the result of hiring savings/vacancies as well as fewer lane changes than were anticipated. Savings in the area of special education are the result of savings in out-of-district tuition costs and contracted services.

We have overspent in the vocational program resulting from increased student requests for our CTE programming.

We have underspent in co-curricular programming due to savings in coaching and extra-curricular stipends.

Savings were seen in student support services resulting from the savings in special education contracted services.

Instruction staff support experienced fewer hours and hiring changes in the IT department and fewer professional development reimbursements.

There is a \$103,909 balance in the facilities line due to savings in oil costs and maintenance upgrades.

The transportation line has been underspent by \$130,888.

Based on hiring savings and vacancies, we then have a balance in the benefits line.

On the revenue side of the ledger, Medicaid revenue is far over what was budgeted. She commended the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services for redesigning and retraining our folks to ensure that we receive the maximum revenue possible.

As of the report dated 5-1-26, on the expense side of the ledger, identified is a balance of \$1,397,647. On the revenue side a balance of \$173,608. With the transfer to food service of \$107,376, the total unreserved fund balance, prior to funding new items, is \$1,463,879.

With the voter approved allocations to the Maintenance Trust of \$300,000 and Contingency Fund of \$125,000 and the placeholder for the Retained Fund Balance of \$376,443, the projected fund balance is \$662,436, which is above the \$500,000 we promised, at the March meeting, to return to the taxbase.

Member Mann asked if it is foreseen that the \$662,436 will stay at that level. Superintendent Bergskaug responded it typically grows from here as encumbrances are released.

Chair Deurloo Babcock asked if there would be any request coming for expenditures. Superintendent Bergskaug stated she does not have an urgent need that she feels needs to be brought forward.

- Business Administrator's Memorandum

Due to the positive fund balance at the end of FY25, the district is exempt from the requirement to increase school lunch prices. As lunch prices were last raised in the 2024-2025 school year, the Director of School Nutrition and the Business Administrator recommend utilizing this exemption and keeping lunch prices unchanged.

The price for breakfast has not increased since the 2022-2023 school year. During that time, food costs, regulatory requirements (including lower sugar standards and domestic juice procurement), and staffing costs have all risen. For these reasons, we recommend increasing the price of breakfast from \$1.75 to \$2.00.

- Budget Committee Update

Member Solon spoke of there having been a good deal of discussion around the changes to the staffing situation. The Budget Committee had been receiving notification and were concerned that this was being highlighted as primarily a budget driven activity. The conversation was not that different than that had at this Board.

There was also a lengthy discussion about possible ways that the annual meeting might be improved. That will be a topic the Board may look into as we move along. There were some significant suggestions put forth by members of the Budget Committee as to things that could be done to perhaps make it more efficient.

- Stipend Committee Update

The Stipend Committee is scheduled to meet on June 3rd to collect data from club advisors and coaches to look at participation rates, time requirements, etc. That data will be used to make a recommendation to the Board for its June meeting regarding any adjustments to our current stipend levels. In addition, they will make a recommendation on how we fund clubs earlier in the process of when there is student level interest.

- Town of Hollis Capital Expenditure Advisory Committee (CEAC).

Member Mann stated this to be an effort across the multi-districts and the Town to identify the large expenditure projects being planned and place them together into a holistic view so that all entities can see what is in the pipeline and plan appropriately.

Last year was the committee's first year. They are now looking at what worked well and how things can be improved upon. One of the suggestions was to better align our work product with how we model/plan. They would like to start amassing our Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) view; perhaps have a first pass around the July timeframe. He is hopeful the June agenda could include discussion of what our CIP plan would look like and then by the September timeframe perhaps a more refined pass at that. These dates are all about a week before the Committee would meet so that the information can be reviewed and discussed. The third pass would be around the December 15th timeframe to have a tightened-up CIP so that the information can be compiled and distributed.

One of the requests, which he was not too pleased about, was to see if we could extend the CIP beyond the five-year period. He spoke of the difficulties with projecting beyond the five years. He did offer that the Board might be able to provide insight on infrastructure expenses, e.g., items that have a specific life expectancy.

Superintendent Bergskaug noted the Director of Facilities will present the revised CIP at each of the June meetings.

She noted the CIP is different depending on who is reviewing it. For example, given the consideration of the developments being proposed, the school has to predict the potential for increased enrollment. In order for the Town to impose impact fees on those developments, the CIP has to already include the potential for future expansion of the schools. In the absence of that identification, impact fees cannot be imposed.

Although the schools have to consider the possibility of expenses associated with the potential need to expand to accommodate increased enrollment and may identify that in the outyears, the CEAC sees the identification of such a project(s) as definitive.

Trying to meet the goals of all of the different stakeholders and be clear as to what is really going to happen when it comes to expenses for items having a certain lifespan, e.g., roof, versus what our planned potentially and nice to have, etc.

Member Mann remarked, as a representative to that committee, his counterpart in Hollis and he can do a better job of making certain that is clear to the committee; just because it is on the CIP doesn't mean it will be promoted into a plan and discussion of bonds, etc.

DELIBERATIONS

- To see what action the Board will take regarding the proposed student trip to Nashville, TN in April of 2027

Proposed is a trip to Nashville for band students. The trip would commence the Thursday prior to April break and conclude on the Monday of April break 2027.

MOTION BY MEMBER MANN TO APPROVE THE BAND STUDENTS' TRIP TO NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE TO TAKE PLACE BEGINNING THURSDAY, APRIL 22, 2027, AND CONCLUDING MONDAY, APRIL 26, 2027

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER STOLL

ON THE QUESTION

Chair Deurloo Babcock noted the proposal was reviewed during the previous meeting.

Member Solon asked if there has been an information meeting concerning this, and was told it has been discussed, but there has not yet been an informational meeting conducted.

Asked if there is a strong commitment on attendance, Principal Hess stated that cannot be indicated as the meeting has not yet been conducted. There is a strong interest in attendance, absolutely. Member Solon asked what the minimum participation number is to conduct the trip. He wished to identify what the buy-in has to be as that impacts the total cost to the students and the viability of them participating. He would like identification of the minimum number of participants needed for the trip to function as intended.

Superintendent Bergskaug stated there to be a potential that 40 is the minimum based on the brochure.

Asked how crucial it is to have the approval at this time; Principal Hess stated a meeting could be conducted to garner interest. Chair Deurloo questioned if the Board was agreeable to waiting for an additional month to take a position.

Member Solon stated if participation is not at a level that is anticipated based on the cost cited, there is the likelihood the cost would increase for the students, but there are also proposed activities that he believes a minimum number of participation is needed to conduct.

Chair Deurloo Babcock suggested tabling the item until next month so that answers could be sought.

Member Mann asked if it would be enough to simply let them manage that. If enrollment decreases then we can't do a particular activity.

Chair Deurloo Babcock stated if the will of the Board is to vote on this so that they can move forward with it as an approved trip, that can be done.

Member Mann stated the question of minimums, etc. is not a deciding factor for him to support it or not. He expects the administrators who are doing this to manage that.

Member Solon stated part of the reason for his concern is feedback he received from community members that the cost of a recent trip was dramatically higher than what was stated at the commitment time. He does not know the reasoning, but the parents felt it was at a time when they could not back out.

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

Yea: Cindy VanCoughnett, Amy Kellner, Rob Mann, Kate Stoll, Holly Deurloo Babcock
5

Nay: Tom Solon
1

MOTION CARRIED

Superintendent Bergskaug requested the agenda be adjusted to consider the proposal for the senior trip.

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

- To see what action the Board will take regarding the proposed Senior Class trip to the North Country Rivers, Bingham, ME from Sunday, May 31st through Monday June 1st.

MOTION BY MEMBER MANN TO APPROVE THE SENIOR CLASS TRIP TO NORTH COUNTRY RIVERS IN BINGHAM, MAINE ON MONDAY, JUNE 1ST TO TUESDAY, JUNE 2ND

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER STOLL

ON THE QUESTION

Vice Chair Stoll questioned why the trip would be capped at 100 students. Superintendent Bergskaug stated that would not be the case. Assistant Superintendent DiGennaro stated her belief that what was identified on the form is actually a minimum participation number.

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

Yea: Cindy VanCoughnett, Amy Kellner, Rob Mann, Kate Stoll, Tom Solon, Holly Deurloo Babcock
6

Nay:
MOTION CARRIED

- To see what action the Board will take regarding the Business Administrator's Memorandum

MOTION BY MEMBER MANN TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE BUSINESS MANAGER TO INCREASE THE PRICE OF BREAKFAST FROM \$1.75 TO \$2.00 BEGINNING AT THE START OF THE 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER STOLL

ON THE QUESTION

Member Solon asked if there are funds available to students for this like other meals. Superintendent Bergskaug stated there to be the availability of free and reduced lunch. Families need to complete the application. We are required to wipe out the lunch account at the end of the year and cover those if we have accounts in the negative.

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

Yea: Cindy VanCoughnett, Amy Kellner, Rob Mann, Kate Stoll, Tom Solon, Holly Deurloo Babcock

6
0

Nay:
MOTION CARRIED

- To see what action the Board will take regarding **Policy IIB – Class Size**
Given its First Reading:

MOTION BY MEMBER MANN TO ACCEPT THE FIRST READING OF POLICY IIB – CLASS SIZE, AS PRESENTED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER STOLL

ON THE QUESTION

Dorothy Flaherty, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction, stated the Policy Committee met and discussed the class size policy in relation to some of the changes that have been occurring at the State level; reduced their recommended class size to more ratios. We also were talking about ensuring we protected the value that we hold in Hollis and Brookline for small class size. In relation to open enrollment, if we don't have a policy that states our desire for lower class size then if a law were passed at the State level we could be held to the higher class size regulations.

In this policy, the changes would reduce the minimum of 15 students in a class to 12 at the time of the initial scheduling; in the spring. That would help to reduce the slide that happens at times at the beginning of the year during add/drop periods. We moved the maximum class size from 25 to 24 unless they meet the maximums of specific courses listed within the policy. That also dropped the maximum requirements for being in chorus from 50 to 40, the computer classes to the number of computers in the lab, the family consumer science remains at 16 because that is the number of teaching stations we have, physical education maximum is reduced from 35 to 30 and removes Science from the list because we have moved our maximum class size recommendation to 24, which is what science was to meet the lab sizes that we have.

Then we reduced some of our specific classes (from fewer than 15 to fewer than 12); mainly our remedial classes, special education classes, Capstone classes, some specific Spanish and languages that are in the 4th year and classes that are an AP course.

The last paragraph that read: "If the class exceeds the specified maximum size or falls below the recommended minimum outlined in this policy, the Principal shall consult with the Superintendent who will assist in reviewing the situation before deciding whether to take such steps as hiring additional personnel, adding/eliminating sections and/or using other resources." was moved to the beginning of the policy.

Superintendent Bergskaug stated understanding that the conversation at the Policy Committee around band and choir was keeping the maximum a little larger at 40 due to constraints within the middle school schedule having the competing factors with physical education. She would love to say middle school band and middle school choir/chorus maxed at 40, but would love to see a lower number for the high school. In the two decades that she has been in this district in some way, shape or form we have never run a high school band that large. She would love to see different maximums based on the needs of the buildings.

Chair Deurloo Babcock stated that suggestion could be taken back to the Policy Committee. She noted in 2017-2018 when we had 48 students signed up for concert band we ran two sections. She is uncertain what the policy was back then, but we had two sections of concert band. She asked if those numbers should be closer to classroom size numbers like 24 or more like a 30 because an orchestra does need a certain number of students.

Superintendent Bergskaug clarified her desire is to have a review based on the needs of the building (middle school band numbers on their own).

Member Solon requested the proposed language in the first paragraph be amended by inserting “and the School Board” following “approved in advance by the Superintendent or their designee”.

Superintendent Bergskaug stated her concern to be that building the schedule takes several months so having the schedule held up by when a Board meeting is does not seem to be the best option.

Yolanda Flamino, Asst. Principal, HBHS, stated agreement commenting typically around this time we pretty much have a good feel of where student schedules are. Counselors would be reviewing them before they are disseminated to the students. If the numbers are only being presented at the May meeting we would not be able to move forward to say these are definitely the classes we are running and then start to sort them through. There is a lot of timing and behind the scene work; we do a lot of hand manipulation with it to try to get students to fulfill all of their requests and minimize reductions. You might say singleton AP classes that are overlapping the same period moving them, which means adjusting some individual schedules. If that were to happen it would have to occur prior to May.

Asked about the opportunity of just exception disclosure, Chair Deurloo Babcock noted that language is already included in the policy. She spoke of having spent a ton of hours in the past few weeks looking at course enrollment numbers for the last five years; specifically looking at band and music, and choir. We are not experts on this. Management of the building is the building Principal and Superintendent’s responsibility. We are a policy, curriculum, budget board. If we start to get into the operations then it is a slippery slope. She would prefer not to have the school board listed there.

Member Solon pointed out it is an exception to a School Board policy and since the School Board owns the policy should not the School Board have oversight when exceptions are made to the School Board policy?

Chair Deurloo Babcock responded that is a good point that can be taken back to the Policy Committee. She is uncertain she will change her mind, but it is something that can be discussed. She added she believes the October date should be changed to October or November or the Fall or by the end of the school year because we have not always done it in October.

She stated the desire for members of the public to understand that there is a significant difference between what is seen in May and what is seen in October. For example, you might see 11 requests for a class in May, which often turn into 4-5 students taking the class. Then you end up with a class running 4 or 5 students and that sounds great, but we are not sure how sustainable that is. By taking it down to 12 we are trying to give more flexibility. We are a little concerned about going too low because the State’s ratio guidelines are under 30. Assistant Superintendent Flaherty stated it to be 30 students or fewer with the hope that you would target around 25. They are allowing to 30 in middle and high school.

Member Solon stated concern with what happens if the Superintendent or designee approves it, the Board is notified and says no we don’t approve it at some later date? That creates more problems of trying to undo something that has already moved through the system.

Assistant Superintendent Flaherty noted the current policy language does not allow for that. The current policy states the Superintendent would approve it.

Member solon stated the desire to change the language because of problems we have had where we get to a point where a Board desires to have something different but we are told it is too late we will get to it next year

and next year by the time we get to it, it is the same situation because it has been approved during scheduling process.

Another request is to consider having the Capstone and AP courses treated as exceptions and not automatically permitted to have fewer than 12. He would like there to be a stronger discussion about the possibility of perhaps running them in alternate years like what we have discussed when there is very low enrollment.

Chair Deurloo Babcock explained the process around policies to be a first reading during which the policy is read and discussed. The policy will come back to the Board for a second reading, which provides the public an opportunity to provide feedback. Typically, policies go through three readings before adoption. We have, on occasion, gone to additional readings, but generally do not.

Member Solon stated a potential for confusion when having a maximum and a preferred maximum. He would rather see another word for the preferred status.

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

Yea: Cindy VanCoughnett, Amy Kellner, Rob Mann, Kate Stoll, Holly Deurloo Babcock, Tom Solon
6
Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

- To see what action the Board will take regarding **Policy JICJ - Unauthorized Communication**
Given its First Reading;

MOTION BY MEMBER STOLL TO ACCEPT THE FIRST READING, WAIVE SUBSEQUENT READINGS AND ADOPT POLICY JICJ – UNAUTHORIZED COMMUNICATION
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANN

ON THE QUESTION

Assistant Superintendent Flaherty stated this to be the new cell phone law that passed. One of the components of it is that you re-adopt annually. We are not proposing any changes to the policy at the current time.

Member Solon inquired as to whether State law has changed since the policy was last adopted, and was told it has not.

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

Yea: Cindy VanCoughnett, Amy Kellner, Rob Mann, Kate Stoll, Holly Deurloo Babcock, Tom Solon
6
Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

- To see what action the Board will take regarding **Policy BCA – Board Member Code of Ethics**

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

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

Yea: Cindy VanCoughnett, Robert Mann

2

Nay:

0

MOTION CARRIED

- To see what action the Board will take regarding the proposed policy memo

**MOTION BY MEMBER STOLL TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDATIONS IDENTIFIED
IN THE POLICY MEMO, AS PRESENTED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANN**

ON THE QUESTION

Recommendation: Third Reading and Adopt (as amended)

Policy BEDB – Agenda Preparation and Dissemination

- 1st Reading: 2-19-26 (as amended)
- 2nd Reading: 4-8-26 (as amended)

Given its 3rd Reading:

Minor changes include:

- Deletion of the words “and Board Packets” in the first sentence that addresses preparation of agendas
- Deletion of the last sentence in the second paragraph that states “Inclusion of items in the Board Packet will be at the discretion of the Board Chairperson in consultation with the Superintendent.”
- Deletion of “(Board Packets)” in the first sentence on the second page when addressing distribution of the agenda.
- Deletion of the last sentence in the first paragraph on page 2 that reads “Board Packets shall not include supporting materials presented to the Board by any Board member, staff member, student, or any other person unless approved by the Board Chairperson.”

Policy JLCF – Wellness Policy

- 1st Reading: 1-21-26 (as amended)
- 2nd Reading: 4-8-26 (as amended)

Given its 3rd Reading:

Minor changes include:

- Inserting “Assess” at the start of the first bulleted item in Section II C
- Inserting “Develop, in conjunction with members of the committee” at the start of the second bulleted item in Section II C.

Recommendation: Third Reading and Adopt (no changes)

Policy BEDG – Meeting Minutes

- 1st Reading: 11-12-25 (as amended)
- 2nd Reading: 4-8-26 (as amended)

Given its 3rd Reading:

Recommendation: Second Reading (minor changes)

EHB-R - Local Records Retention Schedule

- 1st Reading: 4-8-26

Given its 2nd Reading:

Changes include:

- Inserting information pertaining to Google accounts.
- Inserting a sentence explaining the meaning of “asterisks”

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

Yea: Cindy VanCoughnett, Amy Kellner, Rob Mann, Kate Stoll, Holly Deurloo Babcock, Tom Solon

6

Nay:

0

MOTION CARRIED

- To see what action the Board will take in rescinding **Policy BEAA - Meeting Preparation** with the adoption of Policy BEDB

**MOTION BY MEMBER STOLL TO RESCIND POLICY BEAA – MEETING PREPARATION
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANN**

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

Yea: Cindy VanCoughnett, Amy Kellner, Rob Mann, Kate Stoll, Holly Deurloo Babcock, Tom Solon

6

Nay:

0

MOTION CARRIED

REPORT OUT BY PROCESS OBSERVER

Member Kellner stated the meeting ran about an hour past the scheduled completion time mostly due to allocating an additional hour to public input. She spoke of feeling the Chair and Vice Chair did a great job of managing public input. We had a respectful discussion for the most part. She appreciates the passion and eloquence with which our community members spoke.

NON-PUBLIC

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

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

Yea: Cindy VanCoughnett, Amy Kellner, Robert Mann, Kate Stoll, Holly Deurloo Babcock, Tom Solon
6
Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

*The Board went into non-public session at 9:56 p.m.
The Board came out of non-public session at 11:02 p.m.*

MOTION BY MEMBER MANN TO APPROVE THE SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADMINISTRATORS', NON-UNION, AND ALLIED HEALTH PLAN EMPLOYEES' COMPENSATION
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER STOLL

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

Yea: Amy Kellner, Holly Deurloo Babcock, Tom Solon, Kate Stoll, Robert Mann, Cindy VanCoughnett
6
Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY MEMBER STOLL TO ADJOURN
SECONDED BY MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT**

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

Yea: Amy Kellner, Holly Deurloo Babcock, Tom Solon, Kate Stoll, Robert Mann, Cindy VanCoughnett
6
Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

The May 13, 2026, meeting of the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board was adjourned at 11:04 p.m.

Prepared by: Dawn MacMillan, Recording Secretary

Approved: 6-17-26

HOLLIS BROOKLINE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD
MAY 13, 2026
NON-PUBLIC
MEETING MINUTES

A Non-Public meeting of the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board was conducted on Wednesday, May 13, 2026, at 9:56 p.m. at the Hollis Brookline Middle School.

Holly Deurloo Babcock, Chairperson, presided:

Members of the Board Present: Kate Stoll, Vice Chairperson

Amy Kellner, Secretary
Robert Mann
Tom Solon (participated electronically)
Cindy VanCoughnett

Members of the Board Absent: Beth Janine Williams

Also in Attendance: Gina Bergskaug, Superintendent
Lauren DiGennaro, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services
Dorothy Flaherty, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction

As Tom Solon was participating electronically, in accordance with the Right to Know Law, Chair Deurloo Babcock requested he state, for the record; where he was, why his attendance in person was not reasonably practical, who, if anyone, was with him, and whether or not he was able to hear the proceedings.

Member Solon responded he was at his residence, his attendance in person was not reasonably practical for personal reasons, no one was with him, and he could hear the proceedings.

Chair Deurloo Babcock stated, for the record, those present at the meeting were able to hear Member Solon and reminded the Board all votes would be taken by Roll Call.

The Board discussed the following:

- 1) Request from the Mason School District for the HB Cooperative School District to serve as its receiving district.
- 2) The Superintendent's recommendations for the HB Cooperative School District Administrators', Non-Union, and Allied Health Plan Employees' compensation.
- 5) A personnel matter.

**MOTION BY MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT THAT THE BOARD, BY ROLL CALL, COME OUT OF
NON-PUBLIC SESSION AND RETURN TO THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE HOLLIS
BROOKLINE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANN**

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

Yea: Amy Kellner, Holly Deurloo Babcock, Tom Solon, Kate Stoll, Robert Mann, Cindy Van Coughnett

6

Nay:

0

MOTION CARRIED

The Board came out of non-public session at 11:02 p.m.

Date: **May 14, 2026** Signed: **Amy Kellner**