

**HOLLIS BROOKLINE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD  
DECEMBER 11, 2019  
MEETING MINUTES**

A regular meeting of the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board was conducted on Wednesday, December 11, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. at the Hollis/Brookline Middle School Library.

Chairman, Holly Deurloo Babcock, presided:

Members of the Board present:        Tom Solon, Vice Chairman  
                                                      Beth Janine Williams, Secretary  
                                                      Elizabeth Brown (arrived at 6:06 p.m.)  
                                                      Krista Whalen

Members of the Board Absent:        Melanie Levesque  
                                                      Cindy VanCoughnett

Also in Attendance:                    Andrew Corey, Superintendent  
                                                      Gina Bergskaug, Assistant Superintendent  
                                                      Bob Thompson, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services  
                                                      Linda Sherwood, Assistant Business Administrator  
                                                      Rick Barnes, Principal, Hollis Brookline High School  
                                                      Tim Girzone, Principal, Hollis Brookline Middle School  
                                                      Mary Martin, Student Council Representative  
                                                      Annie Hazelton, Student Council Representative

---

**APPOINTMENT OF PROCESS OBSERVER**

Chairman Deurloo Babcock appointed Krista Whalen as Process Observer.

**AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS**

Superintendent Corey requested the first item under Deliberation regarding setting the date for the special meeting for apportionment, be moved up before Public Input and that the Board permit the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District Moderator to provide input during Deliberation.

Gina Bergskaug, Assistant Superintendent, is at her child’s concert this evening. She is expected to be in attendance for 7:00 p.m. Superintendent Corey requested the Principals Report be moved up in the agenda, and that the presentation occur after Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug’s arrival.

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board ..... [November 13, 2019](#)

*The following amendments were offered:*

- Page 13, Line 26; delete “that” before “those”
- Page 13, Line 47; delete “not” before “it”

**MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO ACCEPT, AS AMENDED**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS**  
**MOTION CARRIED**  
**4-0-0**

Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board – **Non-Public** . . . . . [November 13, 2019](#)

**MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO ACCEPT, AS PRESENTED**  
**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS**  
**MOTION CARRIED**  
**4-0-0**

Jt. Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board/COOP Budget Committee . . . . . [November 7, 2019](#)

*The following amendments were offered:*

- Page 1, Line 22 and 24; Matt Maguire should be listed as School Board Secretary
- Page 3, Line 21; correct the spelling of “terms”
- Page 6, Line 18; correct the spelling of “little”

**MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO ACCEPT, AS AMENDED**  
**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS**  
**MOTION CARRIED**  
**4-0-0**

**NOMINATIONS/RESIGNATIONS/RETIREMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE**

Superintendent Corey informed the Board of his receipt of a Letter of Intent to Retire from Melianie Madden.

The letter states in part “I have been an educator since 1977 in varying roles with students from preschoolers to graduate level education. I did not begin to work with high school students until 3 years ago. I was nervous about this change. I was not certain that I would be the best fit for students at this level. My daughter provided me with encouragement, and she was right. I love working at the Hollis Brookline High School with high schoolers. They have been respectful, and appreciative of my assistance. I would like to think of everyone who comes into room 370 as an extended family or community. We care about each other; students and staff alike. My students gave me the nickname Mamma Madden, and this has made me feel valued. It is with sadness that I am tendering my retirement effective June 2020.”

**MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO ACCEPT THE LETTER OF INTENT TO RETIRE FROM MELIANIE MADDEN WITH AN EFFECTIVE DATE OF JUNE 2020**  
**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS**

**ON THE QUESTION**

Chairman Deurloo Babcock remarked it is a lovely letter, and she will be missed by many of her students.

**MOTION CARRIED**  
**5-0-0**

Chairman Deurloo Babcock noted the Board is in receipt of comments regarding Social and Emotional Learning, which will be addressed later in the meeting.

## **DELIBERATIONS**

- To see what action the Board will take regarding setting a date for a special meeting for Apportionment

Superintendent Corey noted the Board's prior vote to set the date for Tuesday, January 28, 2020. It was then realized the Chairman of the Budget Committee would not be available to attend. Given her involvement in apportionment and the overall budget for the past several years, her attendance is important. Proposed is a change in the date to Wednesday, January 29, 2020. Once the date is set, legal counsel will address all requirements of the Public Hearing, etc.

### **MOTION BY MEMBER BROWN TO SET THE DATE FOR THE SPECIAL MEETING FOR APPORTIONMENT AS WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2020**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**5-0-0**

## **PUBLIC INPUT**

Drew Mason, 63 Baxter Road, Hollis, COOP School District Moderator

Questioned the start time for the special meeting, and was informed it would be 6:30 p.m.

He anticipates a ballot vote, and believes it should be a one-hour vote simply because a number of parents will be involved. If residing at the far end of one of the towns, it could take time for one parent to vote and return home for the other parent to then come to the meeting. The consensus of the Board was for it to be a one-hour vote.

He questioned who is responsible for posting the Warrant, and was informed the Superintendent's Office is. He stated the need for the Clerk to be provided with a sworn certificate of where and when the posting was made.

Regarding the rules, he suggested reference could be made to last year's Annual Report, wherein the rules were listed. There is the option of posting the rules on the website and/or having copies in the room. Ms. Brown requested the Administration utilize notice groups and social media forums to disseminate the information. Copies can also be made available in the room.

Moderator Mason offered to speak with the Town of Hollis. Superintendent Corey will speak with the Town of Brookline.

The Moderator and School Board discussed the amount of time required for presentation(s) by the Board. The decision reached was that a 20-25 minute block of time would be set aside. The presentations could be broken down into an explanation of apportionment followed by the current proposal.

Tiffany Testa, 101 Mooar Hill Road, Hollis

Stated support for initiatives that result in addressing school culture, climate, and social and emotional learning. As an educator having over 20 years of experience in school reform and change, and an advocate for the students, she spoke of the increasing rates in concerning behaviors occurring not only in the District, but all around. We are aware of intolerance and other important issues. Everywhere you look, the solution points to social and emotional learning. That is the number one solution.

Ms. Testa stated it has been over 20 years since there has been a shift in the paradigm in education that puts social and emotional learning at the bedrock of every student's needs in terms of their learning. Right now, the best practice is that there is an adult in each building that knows a student well. What is being stated is that it is the building of relationships between adults and students, students and each other, and the building of community that helps learners.

She stated the desire to dispel something she knows will always be a pushback to things like advisory, tending to culture and community, and social emotional learning, and that is that it takes away from academics. These things are not separate from curriculum and learning, but are absolutely paramount. Public schools and public education tend to be reactive. She is asking that we not be reactive.

She stated the desire to look at the Response to Intervention (RtI) model. If a district that does not have things in place already (Tier I and II interventions, e.g., advisory, tending to culture), it would be a Tier III intervention; when it has already become a heightened and intense intervention.

Dr. Marie Ramas, 9 Coburn Lane, Hollis

Stated she is a family physician who works closely with at-risk communities within Nashua. She cares for many underinsured and underrepresented populations. She is a former Board member of the American Academy of Family Physicians. She brings expertise and objective information regarding the importance of social emotional learning.

In her current position working with the Board for the Endowment for Health for the State of New Hampshire, she can state the heightened concern related to intolerance and heightened issues regarding anxiety, depression and other 504 level issues with behavior is not isolated within our community.

As a mother of a middle schooler, it is of utmost importance for her to make sure her child is within a community and school that is not only dedicated to academic excellence, but also to creating leaders. It is a model within her home that they say successful people plan for success. She is very much a believer that successful communities and schools plan for success. Research supports that successful leaders are not only intelligently intellectual, but emotionally and socially as well.

The Governor just signed recent legislation to encourage a model for developing social emotional support. That is because it is evidence-based and because we are witnessing traumatic incidences heightens a level of trauma that impact a young students frontal lobe development. While in middle school is the time when students are developing their capacity to be leaders and for understanding how to make judgment calls.

Dr. Ramas commented on having a wealth of information on evidence-based materials, which she is happy to share. She stated the desire to ensure Hollis Brookline is setting a trend in the State.

Charity Bell, 25 Forrence Street

Is a mother of a 5<sup>th</sup> grade student and has been a foster parent to over 150 children. She is the Director of Training for the Department of Mental Health in Massachusetts for the Northeast Area, a Trauma Responder who responds to suicides, bullying, and violence in schools through Massachusetts, and is a speaker and consultant on trauma, social emotional learning, mindfulness, and adult self-care to schools throughout New England and the country.

Social emotional learning is more important than ever. We are in the midst of time where increasing rates of depression, anxiety and suicide are beyond anything that has ever been seen before in the profession and is reaching into younger and younger ages. In the past year she has responded to suicides of children as

young as 10 or 9 in the public schools. She is in the midst of a speaking tour on a topic called parenting in unparalleled times, and has spent the past 5 years doing research into ways in which society, education, and technology have changed the manner in which our youth experience the world. What seems absolutely clear is that we are not doing enough to equip our youth even as we educate them more aggressively than ever. Our kids are not equipped to deal with the social and emotional impacts of the world they currently experience.

Hollis Brookline is a leader in many areas. Unfortunately, this is not necessarily one of them. She has become a defacto consultant to many parents in the community receiving at least one email or phone call a week from a parent whose child is struggling within the schools due to bullying, anxiety or other issues. At this point, there are many great mini programs and small interventions that are happening, but there doesn't seem to be an overarching framework for social emotional learning that includes guidance as opposed to discipline and other educational supports around the long term.

She stated a willingness to donate 5 days a year for the next three years (her daily rate that schools across the country pay is \$2,000/day) once the District decides to take up this kind of framework to provide any sort of support that would be useful. We are not going to raise children who are successful unless we dedicate not just our time but also our financial supports to this kind of learning.

### **PRINCIPAL REPORTS/ATHLETIC REPORT**

- Hollis Brookline High School Program of Studies

Tim Girzone, Principal, Hollis Brookline Middle School (HBMS), highlighted items included in his report; particularly the work of the Student Council. He spoke of the Thanksgiving Food Drive where they collected over 1,000 different household items, and stuffed his truck and two large SUVs with goods for the Nashua Children's Home. They are currently collecting gifts for a gift drive.

The shared Robotics/Tech Ed space has been rewired to adequately power the recently purchased and newly installed equipment. Everything is up and running.

Approx. 65 students participated in the NH TechWomen Ambassador Week, which was hosted at the High School.

Rick Barnes, Principal, Hollis Brookline High School (HBHS), noted the Instructional Practices Committee update; the Top Ten Sub-committee recently completed its work resulting in a recommendation to the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee may move the matter to the Policy Committee so it may come before the Board.

He spoke of the work that has been done around vaping. He thanked a community member/parent, Mary McGarry, who works for the United States Public Health Services for being an amazing resource in the community. She has pledged to continue to work with the District at no charge.

Principal Barnes noted the HBHS ranked #2 in New Hampshire public schools for STEM. He thanked Dr. Breault, ELO Coordinator, for the work of bringing in the Youth and Traditional Registered Apprenticeships as a Career Path presentation. Dr. Breault also invited Christine Brennan, Deputy Commissioner, New Hampshire Department of Education, out to meet with students in Senior Quest. She was incredibly impressed with the quality of ELOs and QUEST programs our students are running.

Principal Barnes spoke of the report provided by the District Athletic Coordinator noting the first ever Football Championship State Title in the history of the program; an amazing run, journey, and game where

our student athletes really adopted a completely different style of play in some of the most miserable conditions he has ever seen a game played in.

Superintendent Corey stated the Gmax Testing to be a test done on the turf field that provides a concrete rating with regard to concussion. The safety level is 165Gs and our field came in around 90. It is a guarantee that we will be below the Gmax for the first 8 years that the turf is installed. Notable is that the District chose a new product, safety underlayment/padding installed below the field. It significantly increases the safety aspect of being tackled to or falling to the ground.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock commented it is amazing that we have the ability to know of that testing result and one of the advantages to turf field as the same kind of testing cannot be done on a grass field.

Mary Martin, Student Council Representative, stated the Student Council is planning on presenting to Principal Barnes next week, the four main projects (traffic, student I.D., and 2 student events) being worked on in committees.

## **DISCUSSION**

- Facilities Committee Update – Field Update

Superintendent Corey stated Tighe & Bond, the engineers, have developed a punch list that has been provided to the turf company; they will be coming back in the spring. There is paving to be completed, sidewalks, a few catch basins need to be lowered due to settling, a second complete lawn installation (not all grass took given the time of year), erosion control measures, and removal of erosion control fencing in the spring. Kelly Seeley, Business Administrator, will finalize all invoices. The expectation is a presentation can be provided in January. The only unexpected expense was the approx. \$11,000 resulting from the uncovering of ledge. Outside of that, the project has come in on time and on budget.

Vice Chairman Solon thanked the Administration for their efforts. Despite hopes it would go otherwise, the Board relied upon the Superintendent to act as the Project Coordinator; a role he performed very well.

Superintendent Corey expressed gratitude noting this could not have happened without the other members of the team. He commented the most exciting thing was being able to get the football team on the field prior to their play for the championship. He went up to some of the very large linemen and those young gentlemen were rolling back and forth on the field because it was just so nice. It gave him the opportunity to see kids be kids. When speaking about the social emotional aspect, those types of things are some that we have to recognize and hold onto. Whatever opportunities we can give them to not necessarily have to become that responsible adult while in high school is an advantage.

- Budget Committee Update – FY21 Budget Development

Superintendent Corey spoke of having achieved guidance, which is the number the Budget Committee provides the Administration to work with, and one that is believed will be within the confines of what the citizenry would like and at the same time hopefully meet all educational needs. This year they do.

The operating budget will come in at an increase of \$210,642 or 0.9%. Warrant Articles include the HESSA contract, Contingency Fund, Athletic Trust (funded through fees), Maintenance Trust (\$200,000), Special Education Trust, and SAU Assessment (\$910,255). Were the voters to approve the budget and all Warrant Articles, the increase would be \$448,672 or 1.81%.

In terms of what the budget means educationally, the personnel request of the French teacher in both buildings is captured as is the cost of the van drivers, which results in increased educational time at the CTE programs (our drivers). There are a few reductions under personnel, e.g., Athletic Director at High School moving to part-time and the District Maintenance Supervisor moving out of that role and an additional custodian being hired. Those moves will result in savings. The stipends requested by the Principals are included. The cost of the shared nurse is able to be allocated. A nurse will come on board resulting in 7 nurses for 6 schools. Through the use of the IDEA grant, a nurse will start in the second semester within the COOP District to help meet more of the student needs.

Superintendent Corey spoke of the additional requests by the Principals, e.g., textbooks, graphic calculators. Computer equipment includes Phase I of the HBHS tech plan (approx. \$90,000) for engineering, computer science, and physics and the requested Chromebook and carts for the HBMS. Other computers continue to be replaced based on the established replacement cycle. Six new projectors will be purchased for the HBHS and five for the HBMS. A number of computers will be replaced as a result of the requirements of HB1612. As is customary, older computers will be refurbished and repurposed.

Phase II of the camera purchase is included. In the area of athletics, field hockey goals and an ice machine at the HBHS have been included as has the carbon volleyball pole system at the HBMS.

Under Facilities/Maintenance, listed on the spreadsheet are the items intended to be funded through the budget and those highlighted are items that had been identified in the operating budget and are now intended to be funded through the Maintenance Trust Fund. Some of the items to be funded through the budget include intercoms at both buildings, Phase III of table replacement at the HBMS, and flooring replacement.

Vice Chairman Solon noted the total to be funded through the Maintenance Trust Fund has been reduced by over \$100,000 from Round 3 to Round 4 of the budget discussion. Superintendent Corey explained the deadline for informing the District of intent to retire has passed with only two notices being received. The District typically budgets for 4-5 retirements. When the funding that is required to be allocated for such instances was known not to be needed at that level, the funding was moved back into the operating budget.

Superintendent Corey spoke of some of the items that will be addressed through the Maintenance Trust Fund. Phase I of the road paving is one. The Administration has communicated with the Town to gain purchasing power. Phase II of the cafeteria flooring at the HBHS will be done. At the HBMS approx. \$25,000 has been allocated to address paving issues (back side of building and entranceway).

The operating budget is currently identified as \$23,493,597. Adding to that the Warrant Articles for the HESSA contract (\$81,139), Contingency (\$100,000), SAU Assessment (\$910,255), Athletic Trust (\$67,000), Maintenance Trust (\$200,000), and Special Education Trust (\$25,000) results in a total of \$24,876,991.

Asked about the \$40,000 elevator replacement hold, Superintendent Corey stated the elevator at the HBMS will have to be replaced in the next few years. The allocation of \$40,000 is intended as a savings mechanism to cover some of that cost (anticipated to be \$80,000 - \$100,000).

Asked if the pay-to-play fee remains constant because the number of students is constant, Superintendent Corey responded it is a number the Administration feels confident will be received in revenue. What typically occurs is \$35,000 - \$40,000 remains in the account. That addresses fluctuations from one year to another.

Superintendent Corey remarked it is a very strong budget, and one the Administration is excited about as it provides many needed items, and sets the District up well.

Asked if he believes there will be Budget Committee support, he indicated he would be surprised if there was not. He believes there will always be the discussion of whether a little more could be reduced, and the only place he would be comfortable looking to would be the Maintenance Trust. If asked to find \$20,000 or \$30,000 he would perhaps not have as much of a savings for the elevator and move 2-3 items back out into maintenance. The items that are there are needed.

Superintendent Corey noted in the Brookline School District, the operating budget is a reduction of 2.2% (bond maturing) and in the Hollis School District an increase of approx. 7% (significant influx of student service costs).

Asked if it is the expenditure side that is impacting the budget, Superintendent Corey stated that to be the case. He noted what will benefit both towns is the adequacy aid going up as it did this year. Both towns saw the tax rate impacted in a positive way by that increase. With the Brookline School District budget decreasing and the amount of adequacy aid increasing he believes it will be a good year. If the Governor, after year 2, pulls back on all of this, there will be a tax spike in the following year to make up for the lost revenue.

- SAU Budget Update

The increase being proposed in the SAU 41 budget equates to the cost of the requested new position of Facilities Director. It is felt, having been through a number of projects and having buildings 20+ years of age, there is the need for an individual having a level of expertise around HVAC, roofing, and other types of infrastructure pieces. The Business Administrator has been doing yeoman's work regarding Capital Improvement Plans, etc., but it is felt this is the last piece from a SAU staffing point of view.

The increase over the FY20 budget is \$67,786 or 3.9%. Were the voters to approve a default budget, the SAU would not move forward with the position. The SAU budget is the first to pass (December). Once approved by the SAU 41 Governing Board, it is incorporated into the individual district budgets.

Anne Elser, who was with the SAU as the Assistant Director of Student Services moved into the Hollis School District. The position was not filled. Stipend funding was allocated to a few building coordinators given the lateness in regard to the hiring process and because Amy Rowe was able to step in and do more than had been anticipated. She will be staying on board next year working with Assistant Superintendent Thompson, taking on the position of Assistant Director of Student Services. The transition from her current role will occur on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Superintendent Corey stated the reason for sharing the information at this time is that the budget of the SAU impacts all of the districts.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock stated her pleasure to hear that the personnel and stipend requests made it through the budget rounds.

## **PRESENTATION**

- Whole Child Education (SEL)

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated the purpose for the presentation was to talk about the whole child focus. When the committee presented to the SAU 41 Governing Board at the first meeting of the



fiscal year, it was done as an entire SAU. They have worked diligently over the past few years to bring everyone together, to be reminded of why they are here, and to look at the child from K-12.

A few years ago she noticed there were a number of professional development requests or individual building requests related to various aspects of social emotional learning or the whole child focus. The District was doing great things, and it was all great work, but there was the desire to take a step back and identify, as a district, what we are doing and how we coordinate our efforts to ensure we are all moving together in the same direction.

A few years back, the SAU 41 Social Emotional Learning Committee was formed. The Board has seen pieces here and there in individual goal presentations. Before the Board was a presentation on what is being done as an entire SAU.

Assistant Superintendent Thompson commented when talking about the whole child focus it is important to cover the aspect of physical safety. When it comes to emergency management and school safety, the SAU is a leader within the State. He spoke of activities that have taken place over the past few years; all 6 schools have comprehensive emergency operations plans, which are standardized across all buildings. When you walk into the Hollis Primary School as a volunteer, substitute or student, how they respond to emergencies is identical to how they are responded to at the High School.

The District has highly trained staff who have completed (on their own) hundreds of hours of training in active shooter, incident command, threat assessment, etc. Each summer the District opens its doors to law enforcement where Homeland Security and local police departments come in and train. All of the Hollis and Brookline Police Officers are very familiar with our buildings.

Two years ago the Governor started an Emergency Preparedness Task Force after a school tragedy. There was one teacher who represented that group; a Hollis Brookline Teacher, Dr. Laura DeRosa. Additionally, there is a district-wide safety committee consisting of representatives from all 6 schools, police, fire, EMTs and Homeland Security. They tackle really interesting problems. This past Tuesday they met and had a conversation about how to get emergency vehicles into Hollis Primary during carpool. It is a challenge with traffic issues.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been invested into infrastructure, e.g., protective film for windows, controlled access, etc. Our School Resource Officer is the President of the New Hampshire School Resource Officers Association. This past June the district was asked to present at the Emergency Preparedness conference in Manchester. It is a conference typically attended by emergency service personnel. The District was the first school to be asked to present. The head of the Department of Homeland Security showed up with several of his colleagues, sat in the front row, and the comment they made at the start of the presentation was this is Hollis and Brookline, they are the standard when it comes to safety and security in the State of New Hampshire.

The message given to staff is yes we are at the top of our game when it comes to emergency management. However, it is not enough. All of the work that has been done is very reactive. It is predicated on something has to go wrong in order for us to exercise all of the training we have done. If we really want to be proactive when it comes to safety, this is really where we need to look at social emotional learning and the whole child. We have students in our classrooms that have anxiety, some so bad they cannot come to school. There is the need to ensure we are educating the whole child. It is a lot larger than physical safety. That is where the Social Emotional Learning and the whole child comes in.

The November professional development day started with a presentation from the Choose Love Movement. The Choose Love Movement was started by Scarlett Lewis. Her son Jesse was one of 20 students and 7

teachers who were murdered at the Sandy Hook Elementary School. That set a good tone for the day in terms of her message that we need to create cultures of caring. There were three strands that were the focus for the day; whole-child education, instructional best practices of essential standards, and safety.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug reiterated the work started as a SAU-wide committee two and a half years ago with the goal of being systematic. The committee began by developing a mission statement. They also wanted to identify an agreed upon definition of what Social Emotion Learning or Whole Child Education is so that when speaking about it within the SAU there is a common understanding.

The committee believed it important to develop a community resource list so that were there a student in crisis the adult in the building immediately had numerous resources to provide for the family, the teachers of the students impacted, and anyone that needed someone to go to. Another objective was to identify what was occurring in each of the buildings in terms of SEL interventions/tools being used, effectiveness and a determination of continuing with current practices or adding to them. In order to determine effectiveness, a teacher questionnaire was implemented so that teachers could answer if they were observing certain trends, if they felt comfortable working on certain characteristics in the classroom, and if they needed any support. From there, the committee identified focus areas for the district.

The Mission Statement for SAU 41 is to promote a relationship-centered culture that supports academic, social emotional and physical well-being in a nurturing learning environment. We aim to develop resilient and productive members of society and be responsive to the diversity and needs of students, staff, families and community.

Social Emotional Learning is the process by which children and adults develop the awareness and skills to make positive decisions, deepen their relationships, and reach their goals. The definition was pulled from the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). They led the work with social emotional learning, have been doing work for over 20 years, drive the research, guide practice, and inform a lot of policy in this area.

Assistant Superintendent Thompson remarked one of the first things the committee did was look to the research; what does it say about social emotional learning. One of many pieces of data looked at was the 2013 American College of Health Association survey (survey of 100,000 college students). The data indicated 84.3% felt overwhelmed by all they had to do, 60% sad, 51% felt overwhelming anxiety, etc. What really hit home with the group was that 8% seriously considered suicide. A lot of the articles they reviewed defined, particularly at the college level, that there is a mental health crisis that is occurring post-secondary. Kids may be coming to college equipped with the academic skills, but those social and emotional skills are not coming.

SEL programs enhance children's confidence and increase their engagement. Schools that have comprehensive SEL programs see an increase in academic performance. At times you hear the argument why focus on SEL when the focus should be on academic achievement. Research indicates when you focus on quality SEL for children you will increase academic achievement levels. Children who are able to effectively manage their thinking, attention, and behavior are also more likely to have better levels of achievement. Children with greater social emotional competence are more likely to be ready for college, succeed in their careers, have positive relationships and better mental health, and become engaged citizens. Those with strong social skills are more likely to make and sustain friendships, initiate positive relationships with teachers, participate in classroom activities, and be positively engaged in learning.

Social and emotional skills serve as important protective factors in the face of negative life events or chronic stressors and support general wellbeing, such as job and financial security as well as physical and mental health, through adulthood. There is a great deal of research about the impact of trauma on the brain.

What we know is that trauma can actually rewire the brain and create pathways that make it incredibly difficult for students in terms of academics, their relationships, their emotional regulation, depression, anxiety, etc. Research suggests the brain can be rewired, and social and emotional learning, when done well through a research based program, can actually do that.

The CASEL Wheel breaks up into competencies; self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. The District has added optimistic thinking, personal responsibility, and goal directed behavior to some of the focus areas. Those are the competencies that were looked at when the questionnaire was developed.

The standards were defined, and all of the teachers, nurses, school counselors, and principals were asked how often students demonstrated strengths in this area in the last month (in general), and how comfortable they were with teaching the skills. The responses indicated self-management and self-awareness were the clear areas where we need to focus. Those are the areas where it is felt the most professional development could be offered and the areas where the students need the most support. That has been the focus for this year.

The SAU 41 District goal of Whole Child was established and presented to the Governing Board a few months ago. Self-management and self-awareness became the social emotional whole child strands. The District-wide professional development day in November was focused on those areas.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug remarked, for the first time, the professional development day was focused so that participants were required to obtain professional development in each of the three key areas of focus. They started the day with the Choose Love presentation. From there they went to Whole Child Education. Some folks went into a room and started writing lessons on self-management and self-awareness, some went to sessions where they learned more about those specific skills, some went to middle school focused sessions, etc. The second strand was instructional best practices of the essential standards, and the final strand of the day was school safety.

From the work over the summer, the SAU committee really made the switch and is directing the work; saying that self-management and self-awareness is the work we will be doing, but we need more classroom teachers on the ground working. The SAU committee included classroom teachers, school counselors, school psych, but could not pull everyone from every building to meet at the same time in the middle of the day.

Each of the buildings has been tasked with setting up a social emotional whole child committee where they will begin looking at curriculum for their grade level/building. It was intentional knowing there are different developmental needs at each level.

Over the summer, the SAU committee did a great deal of curriculum work; wrote an entire new curriculum for ROCK focused on self-management, self-awareness, and other social emotional learning pieces. They are continuing to write the curriculum so that all students have exposure to these really critical pieces.

At the high school, they dedicated staff meetings to what does this look like and who do we bring in to work with the entire student body or grade level. The SAU committee will continue to meet quarterly to hold every building accountable and to ensure what we are doing and that we are communicating K-12 so that we have an organized and intentional approach. They will continue to ask the teachers the question in the spring; with what we have implemented, did it have an impact. If not, do we need to do it again or change it. Do we still see the same areas as areas of need, or have we seen growth in those areas, and we need to change our focus?

Vice Chairman Solon questioned the kind of activities that are core to the social emotional learning elements, e.g., what needs to be there, what might be lacking, etc. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug responded a lot is standardizing vocabulary and being very intentional about what you do. It is easier in an elementary school classroom as students are with the same group all day long and morning meeting is the perfect time for here is our story we are going to read, and we are going to talk about the story and characteristics. Last year the middle school group spent some time in social studies and English looking at the novels they were reading or the main characters, and what they are doing in a way that we are utilizing the same vocabulary terms so we can see how a character may or may not have self-awareness rather than utilizing other terms. Just bringing it to all content areas and being really intentional.

Principal Girzone's committee is doing great work and it will be put into play on Friday.

Principal Girzone stated they have a group coming in, personal responsibility organization, specifically talking with students about self-awareness. They have a presentation specifically focused on tools for self-reliance. The group comes highly recommended and is sponsored by the Community Action Safe Team (CAST). The school counseling department has had experience with them in smaller groups.

Vice Chairman Solon stated a desire to understand if they are separate things that need to be introduced or a way of how you conduct your every day teaching. The response was that it is both. Assistant Superintendent Thompson provided the example of something they are trying to standardize across the district; research based intervention called Mental Health First Aid. We are lucky to have a trainer, Kristine Turcotte, in our District. There are only a few trainers in the State. The concept of mental health first aid is very similar to first aid or CPR, you identify/see someone who is experiencing a mental health crisis and you provide them immediate support as you bring in professionals to help support that. That is work she started by training all of the middle school. She has now trained about ¼ of the high school and many individuals at the elementary school, and will continue to do that while also running mental health first aid trainings for parents working with CAST, and when appropriate providing that training to students. That is something that is universal. You also have other programs like the advisory at the middle school that is more specific to the middle school.

Vice Chairman Solon questioned if there is an age limit to effective social emotional learning. Assistant Superintendent Thompson stated it is a continuum; when dealing with students that have experienced trauma, it becomes more challenging as they get older. One of the aspects of Choose Love that really resonated with him is that it is not a student program. It is really a human program, and the concept is we all take care of each other. There is really a heavy focus on educators taking care of themselves and each other. If we apply the framework of Choose Love, you will see the focus is really on community as a whole; students, parents, and teachers.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug commented in terms of continuum, we want to go in the same direction and standardize the work that we are doing, but there is not a one size fits all. We have to start with something and develop it as the students develop. At any age or stage you will have students in various points as you will with anything they are learning. We have to be mindful of experiences they have had, experiences we have provided for them in the school, and how we bring them to the next phase, whatever that would be for them.

Asked how effectiveness is assessed, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated the ability to measure effectiveness was a point that was really difficult for the committee. That is probably where they spent the most time; what does it mean to be effective, can we ask all of these questions, do we want to ask questions. What was felt was you can understand all of this stuff, but if you don't put it into practice it is not really effective. That's why it was important for the committee to ask the questions of the professionals how often have you observed this because if you are not observing it, it doesn't matter.

Vice Chairman Solon spoke of the accreditation organizations that assess all sorts of things, and questioned if there is a similar program on a state, regional or national level that could come in, without the consequences of a bad outcome, and provide an evaluation periodically. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug remarked there is the potential. The work started three years ago by bringing in the Office of Student Wellness who was absolutely blown away by what we do in our District. But that doesn't really say is it effective.

Vice Chairman Solon questioned if there is something the Board can do whether through authorization or community support, etc. to support the District in identifying whether the work is effective.

Assistant Superintendent Thompson spoke of notification from NEASC that our five-year report is due in the spring. One of the items will definitely be advisory, which is connecting to an individual adult in the building. That is something they will be looking for.

Ms. Brown commented we can't judge that piece by anecdote alone, but she does know that she raised three kids through this process, and she thinks they would all say they were highly connected to more than one adult in the buildings they were in. She stated her belief there could be some value from that being created organically versus being assigned. A lot of the ability to be that effective one-on-one for these students is to click. It is just who do you feel comfortable talking to. We can't assign that from an administrative standpoint. She feels that is one thing, as a District, that we really excel at.

The two things that we are not excelling at by our own standards is the self-awareness and self-management. That seems to her the most difficult thing for the students to figure out in a culture where we have taken away a lot of their ability to self-manage, e.g., we have students coming to the COOP who still have babysitters and are having their time managed by adults. It is a very different culture and environment this generation is being raised in. How do we teach self-management when they don't have as many opportunities to try it out on their own?

Principal Girzone commented one of the components the students face in regard to self-awareness is the communication piece that we did not grow up with; cyber communication. Without understanding how you impact another individual and the influence you can have on someone be it positive or negative, not being in the presence of that individual when they receive whatever communication it is, it reduces the awareness and complicates that communication piece. When we talk about self-awareness with students it is much more complicated than well I am at the lunch table and I did something that was bothersome to another student, there is a whole other layer of impact that students have on each other that we did not have, and we now have to educate students on how to navigate those interactions and dynamics.

Ms. Brown questioned if we know how to navigate those interactions. Principal Girzone responded it is a much more complicated process for our students and if anything we have our perspective from knowing what communication looked like without these additional layers.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock commented social and emotional learning has been a priority of all of the people she has come in contact with since her time on the Board. It has been a conversation that has been had. This presentation is a culmination of all of the things the Administrative team has put into place over the past 6-8 years. She spoke of CAVBlock, the CHOICE program, which is a great program to help students who may not feel super comfortable in the schools right now, they restructured the entire school counseling department giving the counselors at the high school fewer students but a charter to say you will follow this student. We've contracted with Harbor Homes to ensure we have crisis counseling in place. We put into place a change in start time. We have staff members who have initiatives like HB The Change and initiated Challenge Day. There is United for All at the middle school, which includes participation by a number of high school students. The commitment to ROCK has been very clear. Implementation of an

Instructional Practices Committee to look at best practices at the COOP level and making changes in the personalized learning policy.

She stated her appreciation of the presentation because it shows the work that has been done for the past 2-3 years but is also a culmination of the work that has been going on for years and years in social emotional learning in the District and the priority has been on what will make students function better.

To the point of how to measure it, she suggested revisiting the questionnaire will help identify if there are any changes. Sometimes we can't measure by numbers alone. Sometimes it is just students are reporting. For example, she remembers attending a forum about CAVBlock and learning the purpose was about trying to decrease stress. She is uncertain if the numbers have decreased, but when you talk with students and say what if we took away CAVBlock, you can see their blood pressure rise at the idea of it. This year Adaptive Scheduler came into play for CAVBlock. She asked her child today, just to confirm. He takes 10 minutes every 4<sup>th</sup> period on Monday and gets to choose where he is going to go. In essence, he can choose who he wants to be with. We haven't really seen how effective Adaptive Scheduler is because this is the first year the entire school is doing it.

She is excited to hear back and that it is going to be a building level committee. She does think there is a big difference with how you will teach this to a 1<sup>st</sup> grade student and how you will talk to an 11<sup>th</sup> grade student about it. It is important to get the building level committees going so that they can be really specific about what needs to happen.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock noted there has been some really good feedback about concerns that we're not addressing it or that we don't take it seriously. Her whole life is about social and emotional learning. She feels that is why she is on the Board, and does take it very seriously.

Ms. Williams stated appreciation for the fact that the focus is an all-encompassing nature. Although the Board is focused on the middle and high school students, they are coming from the elementary schools.

Vice Chairman Solon commented one of the things he understands was important to his children and many of their peers was the relationship with a faculty member. For one of his children it was a teacher and another a coach. This is an area where athletics is a really big deal. One of the things he hopes the District can ensure is that through policy, schedule, or whatever it is, that we maintain the environment where both the students and staff feel the freedom to have that level of relationship. There is a lot going on with policy because of all of the different movements of maintaining proper distance between adults and students. One of the things that kept his child sane was the fact that they could blur that line between someone being a teacher and someone being a friend. He would not want staff to feel so afraid of developing a meaningful relationship. Granted there has got to be propriety, but within the bounds of propriety there is a lot of leeway. It will take different flavors for different students. We have to be mindful with policy that we don't close the door on those opportunities.

## **DELIBERATIONS**

- To see what action the Board will take regarding the Hollis Brookline High School Program of Studies 2020-2021

Principal Barnes stated the information provided the Board had not changed since last presented at the November meeting. Provided with the [agenda](#) was a summary of the proposed changes.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock commented on her belief the chart for English is a little confusing. It has two sections of required. She understands what students are required to take (4 years of English and a semester

of writing). The way the chart is created is a little confusing as it almost looks like AP English and Language Composition is required because it is in the required bucket. It is technically not an elective because students need to take an English. Principal Barnes stated the document was not in its final formatting, and any feedback is appreciated.

**MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO APPROVE THE HOLLIS BROOKLINE HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM OF STUDIES, AS PRESENTED  
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN  
MOTION CARRIED**

**4-0-0**

*Member Williams was not in the room at the time of the vote.*

- To see what action the Board will take regarding **Policy IMBC-Alternative Credit Options**
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Reading; 10-16-19
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading; 11-13-19 (as amended)

*Given its third reading;*

**MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO APPROVE IMBC- ALTERNATIVE CREDIT OPTIONS, AS DISTRIBUTED, FOR A THIRD READING AND ADOPTION  
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN**

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Deurloo Babcock noted changes to be replacing “his/her” with “their”, and inserting “as referenced in the student handbook” following “Appeals can be brought to an Academic review Committee”. The Academic Review Committee had not been defined. It is defined in the student handbook as opposed to policy because it can change depending on the circumstances. The desire is for the Principal or his/her designee to be able to create that committee.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**5-0-0**

- To see what action the Board will take regarding **Policy IHBH-Extended Learning Opportunities**
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Reading; 10-16-19
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading; 11-13-19

*Given its third reading;*

**MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO APPROVE IHBH – EXTENDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES, AS DISTRIBUTED IN THE AGENDA PACKET, FOR A THIRD READING AND ADOPTION  
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN**

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Deurloo Babcock noted the changes to be similar to those made to policy IMBC.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**5-0-0**

- To see what action the Board will take regarding **Policy IMBA-Online/Internet-Based Education**
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Reading; 10-16-19
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading; 11-13-19

*Given its third reading;*

**MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO APPROVE POLICY IMBA – ONLINE/INTERNET-BASED EDUCATION, AS DISTRIBUTED, FOR A THIRD READING AND ADOPTION  
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN**

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Deurloo Babcock noted the changes to be similar to those made to policy IMBC.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**5-0-0**

- To see what action the Board will take regarding **Policy IIB-Class Size**
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Reading; 11-13-19
  - Given its second reading;*

**MOTION BY MEMBER BROWN TO ACCEPT THE SECOND READING OF POLICY IIB-CLASS SIZE  
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN**

ON THE QUESTION

Vice Chairman Solon spoke of questions about the open door for classes less than 15. He believes there is the need for some limit on small classes being blanketly approved. In offline communication with Principal Barnes, he received his input on what he typically experiences and how he approaches it.

Vice Chairman Solon remarked the truth is he is not overly concerned about how this is being done with the current administration. However, understanding policies often outlive the current participants, he would like to capture some of what Principal Barnes does in the following manner:

Under the section where it says “Classes may have fewer than fifteen students if:”, he would like a comma after the first bullet and after the second bullet because both have their own reasons they have to exist, and it is not really discretionary. At the end of the second bullet insert “or” and following the last bullet insert “and has been approved with low enrollment by the building Principal, and if fewer than 10 students, has been approved by the Hollis Brookline School Board.” He is looking to give the Principal the authority to authorize classes as low as 10. If less than 10, he wants the School Board to sign off. Ultimately, the School Board is being held accountable by the community. If going to have classes of less than 10 students he wants it to be intentional and knowing.

Ms. Whalen questioned if what is intended to be stated is ten registered students. Vice Chairman Solon responded “at the point of enrollment”. Asked when the point of enrollment would be defined, he stated his intent to be that although it is understood that students sign up for classes and things change, and he does not know that a class could be pulled after it has been enrolled in, he wants it at the point where the schedule is being set and built.

Ms. Brown stated if to entertain the idea, that enrollment date has to be in the spring before we recess for summer. She wants to be able to most likely vote on it at the April meeting. She does not want to ever be in a situation where a student wants to be able to drop a class in the fall, and the administration or counselor not allow the class to be dropped for fear that that class is now going to be on the radar of the School Board. She is afraid there will be pressure at both ends.

Asked what constitutes the action of building the schedule, Principal Barnes stated it to be course selection. Done is done when their schedules are handed to them. They have been done as early as April, but it has



been more May. Superintendent Corey stated concern if decisions were not made in April how would the student now find out what they are going to take. If learning in April there remains two months to determine another option.

Vice Chairman Solon questioned if there was agreement with intent. Chairman Deurloo Babcock remarked she can see the intent, but does not feel it necessary. She does not believe there are enough classes that fall into the category, and feels we don't need to micromanage the administration in that way. Vice Chairman Solon stated there to be a fair amount of classes that drop below 15. Chairman Deurloo Babcock remarked what is being discussed is classes that drop below 10. Vice Chairman Solon stated currently classes that drop below 15 don't even have to be brought to the administrator. He provided the example if 3 students enroll in an AP class they don't even have to notify the Principal. Chairman Deurloo Babcock stated if the desire is for language in the policy to ensure that happens she would support that, but the second piece she does not support. She believes the Board has enough say in the schedule without that having to be in policy.

Vice Chairman Solon commented he believes, as a courtesy, the Board is currently kept in the loop, but there is nothing to say that will continue.

Ms. Whalen remarked her first impression was the Board does not want to be micro-managing, but thinking about it further, she agrees, with the current administration, she does not worry about it, but we aren't always going to have the same administrators. There is a point in that Board members are approached often and asked about class sizes. If informed as to why there is a small class size, you are able to speak to it.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock suggested some language could be added to the policy regarding having it reported out in September. She suggested the policy be sent back to the Policy Committee for review and consideration. She is a little concerned about the logistics of the Board approving 6 classes that have 9 students. She is concerned with getting the Board in the middle of that process, which is at times very situational.

Ms. Whalen stated agreement, however, expressed a concern with the April deadline in terms of scheduling.

Ms. Brown commented she is not afraid of micro-managing, if it is an area that is under the purview of the Board. This class size deals with two things that are within the Board's purview; curriculum and budget. She wants to make it manageable, does not want to put a burden on Principal Barnes, wants to ensure students have flexibility, but is not against the concept raised.

Superintendent Corey suggested if doing the policy, there is the need to address CTE classes that only a handful of students are being sent to at a cost 3-4 times that of an AP class in District. Vice Chairman Solon stated they are not classes of the District. Superintendent Corey remarked if looking at it from the point of view of cost it has to be considered. Vice Chairman Solon commented what can come up is the idea of alternative credits. CTE is an option as is online learning. Superintendent Corey stated the desire to have a broader discussion of the policy in terms of CTE, online learning, etc. because it will open that door, and someone will pit an academic course we are offering versus a CTE course. He would rather the discussion occur before it happens.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock commented on the likelihood the policy will undergo 4 readings prior to adoption.

Ms. Brown remarked if looking at the policy, this is the time to have a conversation around whether 25 is a number we want to be bound to in terms of maximum class size. She wants to ensure the Board targets the 20 for math, science, language arts, social studies, and foreign languages. She would prefer to move the maximum from 25 to something lower. The paragraph that states “All other maximum class sizes should be determined by the school administration, based on the appropriate number for that age group,” is redundant if in fact, under class size, the Board is saying the maximum size is 25.

She questioned the will of the Board relative to lowering the maximum class size. She clarified she is okay with Band, Chorus, and PE being at the numbers they are at. The Science number should come down.

Vice Chairman Solon stated he would not be in favor of lowering the maximum if doing leveled classes; where we have sort of leveled and through the weighting process and in theory with qualifications if you have a relatively homogeneous group they can support the large class sizes. It is when you have a heterogeneous class that you run into the problems.

Superintendent Corey stated concern as the budget will be set in a few months for the following year. The process of doing the scheduling to come up with a teacher’s salary, etc. would be very difficult within the confines of the budget. Principal Barnes stated space to be an issue as well. Superintendent Corey remarked he supports the concept; he would just like to have a bigger discussion.

Ms. Brown stated, if looking to make a change it should not occur until after the budget is set and would not be effective until the following academic year.

**MOTION CARRIED**  
**5-0-0**

- To see what action the Board will take regarding Policy JICK – Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention - Bullying  
*Given its first reading;*

**MOTION BY MEMBER BROWN TO ACCEPT THE FIRST READING OF POLICY JICK – PUPIL SAFETY AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION – BULLYING, AS PRESENTED**  
**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN**

ON THE QUESTION

Vice Chairman Solon questioned Section XI; specifically, part 4 and the awkwardness of the last sentence. He also noted in # 7 of the same paragraph, proposed for deletion is the word and in the last sentence, which is needed.

Ms. Williams spoke of amendments she would like to be made under Section VI, Parents. Proposed is a change to the language in #s 2 and 3 as it does not relate to the student. She suggested deletion of the words “encourage their children to” from the last sentence in the beginning paragraph.

Ms. Brown spoke of the language in #3 commenting if not an experienced parent or one that is really integrated into the school culture, she is uncertain she would know what is meant by “inform the school”. If my child comes home and says someone was calling him/her names, she might not feel that is something she should pick up the phone and call the Principal for. Consequently, the parent might not contact anyone. She questioned if there is a point person who would field such calls.

It was noted the initial paragraph in that section states “Parents will be informed of the process and the means for students to report bullying acts towards them or other students.” Ms. Williams questioned how they are informed.

Vice Chairman Solon stated the intent of the paragraph is unclear to him, and questioned if it is to encourage the parents to report bullying or instruct their children to report bullying. It was suggested the intent is to encourage both.

The Policy Committee will review the paragraph and the student handbook to ensure a copy of the policy is being provided to parents annually, that it is part of the handbook, etc.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug noted the policy is one that is consistent among the three districts. It was developed when the law came out with some changes as the law has evolved. There was a strong need to educate staff, students, and families about the law and implications about it. She believes that to be why it is so detailed about parents needing to know things and encourage their children. She does not necessarily want to only put the onus on the parent saying to the child you should report this because then procedurally things change. Sometimes it is okay for a parent to put something out there and then you investigate. Some students will be ready and able to advocate at different ages and stages.

Vice Chairman Solon spoke of the email received from the New Hampshire School Board Association with the new guidelines. Chairman Deurloo Babcock stated she and Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug spent time during the day going through sets of guidelines. This policy is not included.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**5-0-0**

Chairman Deurloo Babcock noted the Hollis School Board is working through policies with a memorandum where they list the policies and go through the approval process. She suggested Board members take a look at one of their agendas to consider if that is something the Board might consider doing.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug commented the policy memo separates the policies before the Board by what reading they are on and identifies whether there are changes, etc. By identifying that there have been no recommended changes, should Board members not have any additional comments, there is the possibility of moving the policy along to adoption. The process has helped to expedite approval of policies.

**REPORT OUT BY PROCESS OBSERVER**

Ms. Whalen stated the agenda moved around a lot, but the meeting went well and included some great public input. She felt there was some good discussion and a great presentation.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION BY MEMBER BROWN TO ADJOURN**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**5-0-0**

The December 11, 2019 meeting of the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_