



**Haverhill Public Schools - School Committee
Hybrid Regular Meeting Minutes of September 8, 2022**

Roll Call - Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor James Fiorentini, Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and requested a roll call of the members:

Attorney Rosa	Present in person	Ms. Sullivan	Present in person
Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Present in person @ 7:17 pm	Attorney Magliocchetti	Present in person
Mr. Wood	Present in person	Mrs. Sapienza Donais, Vice Chair	Present in person
Mayor Fiorentini, Chair	Present in person		

Dr. Margaret Marotta, Superintendent of Schools and Mr. Michael Pfifferling, Assistant Superintendent of Schools were also in attendance at the meeting.

Mayor Fiorentini read an act relative to extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the state of emergency was signed by Lt. Governor Polito and allows for remote meetings and hearings by public bodies through March, 2023. This meeting will be available via live streaming over HCTV and WHAV. The full meeting recording will be posted on the HCTV website.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by the attendees.

Mayor Fiorentini read a statement regarding public comment rules: the Haverhill School Committee encourages the district community to attend its meeting to learn about public school operations and programs. In addition, the committee wants to hear the wishes and ideas of the public. The following points are a summary of the committee’s public comment policy: speakers must provide their full name and address and will be allowed three minutes to present their material, the presiding chairperson may permit an extension of the time limit. Individuals may address topics on the agenda item, items specified for public comment, or items within the scope of the responsibility of the school committee. Improper, defamatory or abusive remarks are not allowed and are always out of order. If a speaker persists in improper conduct or abusive comments, the chairperson may terminate an individual’s permission to address the committee. The committee will not hear personal complaints of school personnel nor against any members of the school committee. All citizens shall speak to the full committee through the chair and should not address individual members or administrators.

Attorney Rosa noted that this was an established policy by the school committee.

Communications/Reports.

Public Comment (In-person & Remote).

Mrs. Dianne Connolly, Director of Title I and Community Engagement expressed her sincere apologies for omitting the ROTC and its summer program’s tremendous efforts. She acknowledged Sam Harrison advocacy of both himself and the program. [2022 Summer Program Budget Binder Summary - ROTC.pdf](#)

Student Advisory Council Report ~ Sean Wynn.

Sean provided an update on high school events:

- The first 2-weeks of school went well
- Open House was held last night
- Boys’ Varsity Football team will play at Trinity Stadium tomorrow night at 7:00 pm
- Girls’ Varsity Field Hockey team will play tomorrow at HHS starting at 5:00 pm

- Spirit Week will be held September 26-30th
- Fall Fest will be held on Thursday, September 29th
- Homecoming Game will be held on September 30th followed by the Homecoming Dance on October 1st.

Superintendent Comments/Reports.

Dr. Marotta indicated that ROTC members will be invited to a future meeting to be recognized for its tremendous recent accomplishments.

Superintendent Marotta reported that the opening of school went well and had visited the Gateway Program yesterday. She noted that the program had a 90-student enrollment and that yesterday's attendance was 90%. The superintendent asked Assistant Superintendent Pfifferling to update the committee on the transportation issues.

Assistant Superintendent Pfifferling noted that the preplanning by the transportation department had resulted in an easier opening than in past years. He reported that because of the earlier start of our district, there were drivers available to cover our routes. Mr. Pfifferling commented that the district was experiencing a difficult time along with significant challenges. He noted NRT was three (3) drivers short this week and this resulted in late arrivals and doubling up of routes. The assistant superintendent stated that along with the unexpected Liberty Street construction (Silver Hill School area) with resulting effects for families. He indicated that there was flexibility with athletic events at the present time, but there had to be continued work with NRT on scheduling and that a swim team meet had to be postponed today. Mr. Pfifferling asked for better communication with NRT regarding athletic matches since the meet was canceled today without any earlier notification. He would be discussing the athletic meets with Mr. O'Brien to hopefully address any future difficulties and supplement with our own fleet.

Dr. Marotta announced the smooth opening of kindergarten yesterday. She reported some higher-than-expected class sizes and the resulting shifts to alleviate overcrowding.

Introduction of new curriculum staff [SC curriculum Brochure.pdf](#)

Mrs. Antkowiak related that the curriculum office was now located at the high school. She introduced the new members of the curriculum team:

- Susan Hatfield, Supervisor of Fine Arts and Music
- Meg Arivella, District Coach, Health & Wellness
- Victoria Hernandez-Bailey, Student Success Coordinator
- Jennifer Peterson, ELA Curriculum Supervisor

The following administrators provided brief summaries of efforts in their specific area:

- Mr. Kevin Higginbottom
- Ms. Meg Arivella
- Ms. Meg DeLong
- Ms. Victoria Hernandez-Bailey
- Ms. Victoria Kelley
- Ms. Susan Hatfield
- Ms. Kate Lally
- Ms. Jennifer Peterson

Mrs. Antkowiak thanked Cheryl Queenan, administrative assistant for her hard work on a daily basis.

Attorney Rosa inquired about the 300 students in Career Technology Education and asked if all students who were interested in the program had been able to be accommodated in the program.

Ms. Kelley replied that all students had been able to enroll in the CTE program.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais was appreciative of the curriculum department's growth especially a fully staffed math department. She suggested STEM coaches in the future.

Mrs. Antkowiak was supportive and encouraged by this suggestion.

Attorney Magliocchetti was pleased with the additional curriculum staffing and hoped for the future filing of District Coach of World Languages.

Special Education Program Updates [Social Emotional Supports 09.08.22.pdf](#).

Ms. Ibanez, Executive Director of Student Support Services commended the transportation department for its efforts in the special education area and commended the ROTC for its offerings for special needs students.

Executive Director Ibanez offered a presentation on social emotional supports in the district.

Ms. Jami Dion, Director of Guidance, Counseling and Student Support Services detailed the P.A.L. Program (Positive Academic Learning).

Ms. Sullivan asked about the specific role of the student support team and its membership.

Ms. Dion responded that the team met on a regular basis to address any academic or social emotional needs that occurred with students. She noted that the team included leadership, school adjustment counselor, school counselor, school psychologist, interventionist support technician, and BCBA.

Ms. Sullivan inquired about social isolation, loneliness, depression effects in regards to addiction to cellphones and if there was any outreach to parents regarding these matters and referenced a recent article in the business section of the Boston Globe. She asked if the district was being proactive in this area with outreach parents and students.

Ms. Dion responded there was always room for improvement, however this type of work was built into the counselor's role.

Attorney Rosa asked about support staff and if there were any vacancies. He indicated that these positions were a priority of the school committee.

Ms. Dion responded that the district was in the process of finalizing the hiring of the last school adjustment counselor.

In response to Attorney Rosa's question on staffing levels, Dr. Marotta reported that when she arrived in the district there were 14 counselors and now there were 40 counselors.

Ms. Dion related that there were three additional guidance counselors with only one vacancy.

Attorney Magliocchetti inquired about any instances of boredom among students because of lack of interest in the curriculum (due to intelligence levels).

Ms. Dion answered that there were classroom observations and renewed focus on back to basics and iReady data that would assist in these determinations.

Attorney Magliocchetti referenced that many successful people were not good students.

Ms. Ibanez would be presenting a report along with Ms. Craig within the next few weeks on the preschool enrollment and program.

Announcement September is Attendance Awareness Month (steps taken to encourage attendance now and throughout the school year).

Supervisor of Attendance Lorna Marchant delivered information on efforts during September Attendance Awareness Month. She explained the meaning of the term “chronically absent” 10% = 18 days of the 180 days and Haverhill’s pre-COVID rate was 19.4% which was lower than the state average. Ms. Marchant provided the efforts that were underway this month.

Mr. Wood was very concerned with the chronic absenteeism rates.

Dr. Marotta responded that the deans had started this conversation today and it was an important topic for school committee discussion. She would arrange for dean attendance at a future meeting after some recommendations had been formulated by the high school administrators.

Ms. Sullivan noted that late bedtimes were also a byproduct of technology addiction.

Ms. Marchant related that there was a program at a local hospital regarding these problems and some of our students had received referrals.

Superintendent Marotta offered some specifics on consequences for late arrivals (tardiness) at high school.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais questioned the effect on COVID regarding attendance.

Superintendent Marotta stated that there were no quarantines besides the 5-day absence due to a positive diagnosis.

Attorney Rosa asked about the chronically absent listing and its implementation. He noted that there had been improvements prior to the pandemic. Attorney Rosa requested an update in the next few months to determine if the status of attendance. He expressed concerns with tardiness especially at the high school.

Superintendent Marotta indicated that the tardiness issue at the high school was being addressed by the interim principal. She responded that there was a consistent use of conversations to determine the causes of tardiness.

Mr. Wood requested more information on mastery grading. The superintendent answered that the discussion on the issue had begun today among the deans and it was an important issue.

Ms. Sullivan referenced cell phones and social media usage impacted student sleep deprivation, depression and attendance.

Ms. Marchant emphasized that intervention tools now in place to resolve the attendance issues and offered examples of the many potential interventions in solving absenteeism.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais asked about the covid protocol.

Dr. Marotta answered there was no quarantining in Massachusetts. She detailed that if a student or staff member tested positive, they would be out of work/school for five (5) days. The superintendent would ask

Ms. Vozeolas to give an update at the next meeting.

Ms. Marchant re-counted that the nursing staff were helpful with outreach to parents.

Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello inquired about tardiness at the middle school level and was it similar to the high school alert system.

Ms. Marchant encouraged parents to call school regarding their child's illness and if they receive a call from the school. She stated that the alert system was a successful one.

Attorney Magliocchetti asked about random robocall to all chronically absent students.

Ms. Marchant noted there was personal outreach to students/families to implement an intervention plan. She emphasized that robocalls had been found to be an ineffective tool in addressing chronic absenteeism.

Attorney Magliocchetti was concerned with the influence of cellphones and social media on school attendance. He requested regular updates on attendance and getting reducing chronic attendance rates and indicated the issue cut across all income levels.

Ms. Marchant reported on the data reports on attendance in order to speak to the beginnings of habitual absenteeism.

Mayor Fiorentini was disturbed by the statistics regarding chronic absenteeism and asked the effectiveness of home visits.

Ms. Marchant noted that the visits could have beneficial outcomes and resulted in making connections with families.

The mayor asked Ms. Marchant to review the best practice studies and see if we could adopt for implementation in Haverhill. He emphasized the importance of attending school.

Dr. Marotta read the COVID attendance policy: children and staff who test positive must isolate for at least 5 days. If they are asymptomatic or symptoms are resolving and they have been fever free without the use of fever-reducing medicine for 24 hours, they may return to programming after Day 5 and should wear a high-quality mask through Day 10.

CTE Admissions and Application Approval [FY23 Admissions-Policy-HHS CTE.docx.pdf](#) and [Sept 2022 CTEApplication-ENG-6.docx.pdf](#).

Superintendent Marotta reported that DESE had adopted some changes which required school committee's adoption.

Ms. Kelley informed the committee that the admissions and application approval needed to be approved annually by the school committee.

Mr. Wood noted that Whittier Tech was considering a lottery system.

Ms. Kelley commented that the student interview was an important component of program selection.

Mayor Fiorentini was concerned about equity and the neediness students who are not able to be admitted to vocational programs.

Ms. Kelley reported that working with Dr. Marotta all students were granted admission to the program.

A motion was made by Attorney Magliocchetti to approve the CTE application.
Ms. Sullivan seconded the motion.

Mr. Wood requested an update on the principal contact information as a friendly amendment.

A motion was made by Mr. Wood to amend the application (correction of principal information). Attorney Rosa seconded the motion. The mayor requested a roll call vote with the following results:

Attorney Rosa	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Mr. Wood	Yes	Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Yes
Mayor Fiorentini	Yes		

7 members voted in the affirmative
0 members voted in the negative
0 members abstained
Motion passes

A motion was made by Mr. Wood to strike race and ethnicity question from the application, there was no second.

The mayor requested a roll call vote on the application with the following results:

Attorney Rosa	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Mr. Wood	Yes	Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Yes
Mayor Fiorentini	Yes		

7 members voted in the affirmative
0 members voted in the negative
0 members abstained
Motion passes

A motion was made by Attorney Magliocchetti to approve the admission policy. Attorney Rosa seconded the motion. The mayor requested a roll call vote on the admissions policy with the following results:

Attorney Rosa	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Mr. Wood	Yes	Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Yes
Mayor Fiorentini	No		

6 members voted in the affirmative
1 member voted in the negative
0 members abstained
Motion passes

School Committee Reports/Communications.

Attorney Rosa: Recognition of Children's Health Care for donating 660 L.L. Bean backpacks to HPS kindergarten students [chc backpacks photos slides.pdf](#).

Attorney Rosa acknowledged the donation from a local pediatricians' office 660 L.L. Bean backpacks to HPS kindergarten students of as part of the 50 years of caring campaign.

A motion was made by Attorney Rosa to accept the donation and send a thank you letter to Children's Health Care. Attorney Magliocchetti seconded the motion. The mayor requested a roll call vote with the following results:

Attorney Rosa	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Mr. Wood	Yes	Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Yes
Mayor Fiorentini	Yes		

7 members voted in the affirmative
0 members voted in the negative
0 members abstained

Motion passes

Mayor Fiorentini requested a thank you letter be sent on behalf of the school committee from Dr. Marotta.

Subcommittee Reports.

Maintenance Subcommittee Update: Attorney Magliocchetti & Mrs. Sapienza Donais.
Attorney Magliocchetti stated that visits would resume next week.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais asked about the assistant director’s vehicle and if it had been redeployed for other use.

Assistant Superintendent Pffiferling responded that it had been purchased and there were thoughts about using it for other purposes.

Mayor Fiorentini indicated interest in purchasing the vehicle.

Ms. Sullivan reported that the policy subcommittee would be meeting next week regarding playground policy and meet with the girl scouts.

New Business.

Superintendent’s Recommendation to approve Warrant Number EV20220909A & EV20220909B, totaling \$1,037,650.03 and [Combined Warrant EV20220909 and EV20220909B.pdf](#) and [Detail Warrant EV20220909 and EV20220909B.pdf](#) as indicated in the agenda material.

A motion was made by Mr. Wood to approve the warrants. Ms. Ryan-Ciardello seconded the motion. The mayor requested a roll call vote with the following results:

Attorney Rosa	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Mr. Wood	Yes	Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Yes
Mayor Fiorentini	Yes		

7 members voted in the affirmative
0 members voted in the negative
0 members abstained

Motion passes

Items by Consensus.

Superintendent’s Recommendation for Approval of the Hybrid Regular Meeting Minutes of August 25, 2022, [Final Edit Hybrid School Committee Regular Meeting 08.25.22.pdf](#) as indicated in the agenda material.

A motion was made by Mr. Wood to approve the minutes. Attorney Magliocchetti seconded the motion. The mayor requested a roll call vote with the following results:

Attorney Rosa	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
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Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Mr. Wood	Yes	Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Yes
Mayor Fiorentini	Yes		

7 members voted in the affirmative
 0 members voted in the negative
 0 members abstained

Motion passes

A motion was made by Mr. Wood to adjourn the meeting (9:04 pm). Attorney Magliocchetti seconded the motion. The mayor requested a roll call vote with the following results:

Attorney Rosa	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Mr. Wood	Yes	Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Yes
Mayor Fiorentini	Yes		

7 members voted in the affirmative
 0 members voted in the negative
 0 members abstained

Motion passes