



Haverhill Public Schools - School Committee

Hybrid Regular Meeting Minutes of February 8, 2024

Governor Healey has extended pandemic-related authorizations thereby allowing remote and hybrid meeting options for public bodies through March 31, 2025.

Mayor Barrett read the following statement published for the record: those attending tonight's meeting should be aware that the meeting is being audio and video recorded by HCTV, ET and WHAV. Any audience members who wish to record any part of the meeting must inform the Chairperson who will announce the recording. This is to comply with the MA wiretap statute.

Roll Call.

Mayor Barrett, Chairperson called the meeting to order (7:00 pm) and requested a roll call vote:

Ms. Collins	Present in person	Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Present remotely
Ms. Diaz	Present in person	Dr. Story	Present in person
Ms. Ferguson	Present in person	Ms. Sullivan	Present in person
Dr. Grannemann	Present in person	Attorney Magliocchetti	Present in person
Mrs. Lalumiere	Present in person	Mayor Barrett	Present in person
Attorney Rosa	Present in person		

Superintendent Margaret Marotta, Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent Michael Pfifferling were also in attendance.

Communications/Reports.

Public Comment (In-person & Remote).

Mr. Peter Yannakoreaus, 185 Milvale Road, Haverhill, MA questioned the authority of the school committee and the laws. He again asked why the schools would display an anti-Christian poster and asked for redress of the situation with an apology to all Christians. Mr. Yannakoreaus spoke against evolution and believed it was a racist religion and parents should be informed regarding its teaching in our schools. He asked about the 3-minute rule and noted his attorney would be contacting the school committee.

Mrs. Helen Zbitnoff, acknowledged a ceremony held today at the high school which honored students who received the Massachusetts State Achievement Award. She related that it was a very nice event.

Student Advisory Council Report – Melanie Palacios.

Ms. Palacios announced that the Winter Formal had been canceled; a trivia night would be held on Tuesday, February 27, 2024, from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm and the Early College committee meeting will be held next Thursday.

Superintendent Comments/Reports.

Introduction of Dr. Lane Glenn, President of Northern Essex Community College to discuss early college programming.

Dr. Glenn reported that early college programs had been a significant part of DESE and Higher Learning Planning. He indicated over 1,000 students participated in this program at NECC. Dr. Glenn stated that the credit application was being discussed at the state level. President Glenn clarified that advanced placement test scores of at least a 3 are sometimes not transferred into college credits but maybe counted as an elective. He explained the difference between early college credits in public and private institutions. He reported that the 2023 high school graduating

class were enrolled in both public and private institutions, i.e., 75% public institutions and 24% private institutions.

Ms. Collins commented on the affordability and the types of students who were enrolled in these programs.

Dr. Glenn stated that the state designation of Haverhill High School and Northern Essex Community College allowed all students the ability to enroll in college level courses.

Dr. Story was involved in the early college and advanced placement committee. She noted the schedule for early college students taking classes in the morning at the high school and in the afternoon taking courses at the college. Dr. Story hoped for more flexible schedules.

Dr. Glenn responded that there were multiple types of schedules with high schools and would consider any options.

Attorney Magliocchetti commented on the changes and evolving of the early college program. He noted the robust AP program at the high school. Attorney Magliocchetti inquired on any upcoming changes in regards to early college.

Dr. Glenn clarified that DESE and Higher Learning Departments were including early college in its strategic plans. He reported that the governor's budget level funded the early college program. President Glenn related that Massachusetts had one of the highest numbers of college graduates in the country.

Attorney Magliocchetti asked if the professors were looking at advanced placement courses.

Dr. Glenn replied that that was not a topic of discussion at the college level.

Introduction of High School Principal Michael Downs and Associate Principal Victoria Lu to discuss the High School Program of Studies.

Associate Principal Lu commented that there was a goal of the expansion of honors classes. She noted that there would be changes in the course order in the Classical Academy. Ms. Lu reported on the various new/established courses that were being offered and/or re-envisioned for the next school year. The associate principal indicated the STAMP test with a score of 3 resulting in the seal of biliteracy. She related that the reading assessment was administered by NECC Staff.

In response to Attorney Rosa's question on waivers, Ms. Lu answered that the high school was establishing an internal system.

Dr. Story asked about the outreach regarding the program of studies to both high school and middle school students.

Ms. Lu responded there were visits to the schools.

Dr. Story asked about elective enrollment and low enrollment resulting in course cancellation.

Both Mr. Downs and Ms. Lu replied that there was an adjustment in the planning schedule resulting

in students having a modified schedule.

Attorney Magliocchetti asked about the elimination of honors/accelerated programs.

Ms. Lu commented on the importance of equitable access for students and that being the reasoning behind the changes.

Attorney Magliocchetti inquired about the establishment of the advanced placement courses.

Mr. Downs related that it was a national curriculum/standard by the College Board, not designed by the high school.

Attorney Magliocchetti noted the importance of outreach to the middle schools. He indicated that high school students should be going out to middle schools.

Ms. Lu related that the ninth-grade counselors were going to the middle schools to discuss the courses and for students to get acquainted with potential counselors.

Mrs. Lalumiere was pleased to hear about earlier selection of courses. She asked if the high school (proper) went out to the middle schools.

Principal Downs commented on the possibility of a move-up day for eighth-graders.

Mrs. Lalumiere was hopeful that middle schools would get excited about attending the high school.

Dr. Grannemann asked if there were opportunities for students to challenge themselves.

Ms. Collins was excited about the changes.

Attorney Rosa inquired about the support provided by guidance counselors in making academic choices.

Ms. Lu related that counselors were providing lessons regarding college and career readiness in the win block.

In terms of Attorney Rosa's question on guidance counselor contact, Ms. Lu responded that there were mandatory times for counselor check in with their students.

Attorney Rosa asked about the concerns of some classes without adult supervision. He indicated that the situation needed to be addressed immediately and it was a matter of parental concern.

Principal Downs reported that assignments were made each day. He reiterated today to the staff that classes needed to be covered at all times especially for safety reasons. Mr. Downs explained the current process at the high school.

There was discussion among the members regarding the staff/student attendance along with substitute coverage at the high school.

After receiving responses from both the principal and associate principal, the committee's

consensus was to make adult coverage of classrooms a top priority.

School Committee Reports/Communications.

Ms. Collins: Introduction of High School Principal Michael Downs regarding BIPOC Union [BIPOC Union Introduction 2023 \(1\).pdf](#). Dehkonee Cooper (BIPOC) and Chelsea Taabi (BIPOC) along with their advisor Jason Burns provided presentations regarding their groups' activities along with regular meetings held every Tuesday in A-10 at the high school.

Attorney Rosa asked the students why there was lack of involvement in student activities.

It was the consensus of the students that the current communication sources, such as the newsletter, were not as impactful to inform the student population regarding activities.

Mrs. Lalumiere suggested a once-a-week student email.

Attorney Magliocchetti commended the inclusiveness of the BIPOC Union.

Several students remarked that in their opinion, these groups were making a difference in the school and provided an outlet for their voices to be heard in the school community. They commented on the welcoming and positive response from other students, and the support provided to each other as a result of belonging to BIPOC.

Attorney Magliocchetti thanked Mr. Burns for fostering this environment.

Ms. Collins: Introduction of Ms. Leydi Diaz Breton and Ms. Eridania Nieves regarding RISE/GEMS at HHS.

Ms. Nieves explained the purpose of the group (2x each week after school), support and guide ML students promoting successful integration into the school, etc.

The following students: Canauri Gutierrez Minaya (R.I.S.E.), Yanelly Vasquez (R.I.S.E. & GEMS), Keisy Margarella (R.I.S.E. & GEMS), summarized the significance of these groups in their lives.

Ms. Diaz Breton reported that GEMS had between 15-20 girls participating in the program and read the mission statement (created by Carol Ireland, and Eridania Nieves).

Ms. Collins acknowledged the importance of these organizations for student success.

Ms. Diaz Breton reported that 31 RISE students and 20-25 GEMS traveled in the "little yellow limousine" for a visit to the State House at the invitation of Representative Vargas. She added that all students are multilingual in the group.

School Committee member Diaz expressed her pride in the students and noted that she was a volunteer. She asked about expansion to the middle schools and also offered a suggestion that the program be opened to young men.

Mrs. Lalumiere asked how the program was created in the first place.

Ms. Nieves recognized the work of Mr. Reed, retired HHS teacher in the beginnings of the program.

Mayor Barrett acknowledged the great work done by Ms. Nieves and Ms. Diaz Breton.

Attorney Magliocchetti: Whittier Tech Update and the building project. He stated that Mr. Early was unavailable tonight and had agreed to attend a future school committee meeting. Mr. Wood did not respond to the request.

Mayor Barrett reported on her attendance at a recent Whittier school building meeting. She related that the school building project was poorly rolled out and that their school administration/Haverhill representatives should have attended school committee and city council meetings a year and half prior to the building project vote. The mayor stated that other communities would be attempting to reopen the agreement to change the financial allocations. She noted there was a frank discussion and there were comments on the lack of scrutiny of the administration. She indicated that there would be a change in governance especially with representatives to the WRVTHS school board.

Ms. Collins asked about the next steps.

Mayor Barrett responded that the money would be returned to the MSBA and the district would return to the “end of the line”. She did not believe there would be another vote. The mayor noted that there was a possibility that Merrimac could incorporate the wastewater treatment plant for the school.

Dr. Story: Discussion of process for selecting Whittier Tech school committee representatives.

Dr. Story had researched the Whittier Voke policy manual and also the selection of the school committee. She added that the representatives did not need to be a member of the local school committee. Dr. Story offered a history of the selection of the representatives. She was in favor of an open and transparent process and stated that at one time there were public interviews. Dr. Story recommended an interview at a school committee meeting prior to reappointment to the board. She added that if a seat became vacant, there should be an open process.

Mayor Barrett was not in favor of changing the agreement.

Mrs. Lalumiere did not support any alterations to the agreement. She concurred with an open process for the selection of the Whittier representative and suggested the development of a policy.

Attorney Magliocchetti stated it was a great topic for discussion. He commented on the challenges of student admissions to the school. The vice chair clarified that having a school committee on the board would allow for better communication, however, it had not occurred over the past years.

A motion was made by Attorney Magliocchetti to refer the selection of the representative to the Whittier Regional school board to the policy subcommittee. Mrs. Lalumiere seconded the motion.

Attorney Rosa stated that there had been no reports from the representatives.

Dr. Story commented on the school committee terms (two-years) and representatives' terms (three-year).

Mayor Barrett suggested an agenda item on regular meetings.

The mayor requested a roll call vote and the results were the following:

Ms. Collins	Yes	Mrs. Ryan-Ciardiello	Yes
Ms. Diaz	Yes	Dr. Story	Yes
Ms. Ferguson	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Dr. Grannemann	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Mrs. Lalumiere	Yes	Mayor Barrett	Yes
Attorney Rosa	Yes		

11 members voted in the affirmative

Motion passes

0 members voted in the negative

0 members abstained

Dr. Grannemann: Process for FY2025 Budget Development and Approval.

Dr. Grannemann stated that budget development was one of the most important functions of the school committee. He made a motion to request that the finance subcommittee to develop a schedule for the school committee's participation in development, review, and approval of the Haverhill Public Schools' budgets for FY25 and FY26 and 2) ask the superintendent to provide her assessment of the top priorities for the FY25 budget at the next school committee meeting. Attorney Rosa seconded the motion.

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

Ms. Collins	Yes	Mrs. Ryan-Ciardiello	Yes
Ms. Diaz	Yes	Dr. Story	Yes
Ms. Ferguson	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Dr. Grannemann	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Mrs. Lalumiere	Yes	Mayor Barrett	Yes
Attorney Rosa	Yes		

11 members voted in the affirmative

Motion passes

0 members voted in the negative

0 members abstained

Attorney Magliocchetti: Updated School Committee Meeting Schedule (a recommendation to cancel the February 29, 2024, scheduled meeting).

Attorney Magliocchetti noted that there usually was only one meeting in February, however due to the leap year, a meeting had been scheduled for February 29, 2024. He asked the superintendent if there were any priority matters that would need to be discussed at this meeting.

Superintendent Marotta responded that the only matter would be the budget.

A motion was made by Attorney Magliocchetti to eliminate the February 29, 2024 meeting from the calendar. Ms. Collins seconded the motion.

Mrs. Lalumiere offered that there were always topics for discussion, but would not be opposed to the cancellation.

Dr. Grannemann stated that the meeting date could be used to begin the budget development process.

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

Ms. Collins	Yes	Mrs. Ryan-Ciardiello	Yes
Ms. Diaz	Yes	Dr. Story	Yes
Ms. Ferguson	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Dr. Grannemann	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Mrs. Lalumiere	Yes	Mayor Barrett	Yes
Attorney Rosa	Yes		

11 members voted in the affirmative

Motion passes

0 members voted in the negative

0 members abstained

Subcommittee Reports.

Finance Subcommittee Update: Attorney Magliocchetti, Chairperson.

Attorney Magliocchetti stated that the subcommittee had met recently with an eye-opening discussion. He reported that there was an \$1M+ deficit due to out-of-district transportation. Attorney Magliocchetti's recommendation was to be diligent this year and in next year's budget discussion. He noted that educational funding was very complex and provided some examples. Attorney Magliocchetti related the challenges of FY25 and the need for a collective effort to resolve the budget situation. He noted that the mayor had asked for the school department numbers by next Friday. The vice chair noted that the finance subcommittee would be meeting on a regular basis.

Attorney Rosa expanded on the budget challenges indicating that the transportation deficit was a result of homeless student transportation shared with other communities with Haverhill's share resulting in a \$570,000 deficit.

Mr. Pfifferling reported that on the FY23 EOY Report: \$547,000 was reported as last year's expenditure for homeless students and this year FY24 expenditure amounting to \$1M. He added that the moratorium on evictions was being lifted in the state. The assistant superintendent referenced quotes (10 vendors) that had been solicited for homeless student transportation. He reported that DCF transportation deficit was \$143,000.

Attorney Rosa noted the deficit in crossing guards' line item (police department \$75,000) with an explanation that the police budget was cut and the school department had received no notification (former mayor's decision) so the total amount had to be absorbed by the school district.

Early College/Advanced Placement Committee Update: Ms. Collins and Dr. Story, School Committee Representatives.

Dr. Story commented that the first meeting had been held last week with the distribution of a lot of data, participation from a cross section of stakeholders, along with being divided into four different working groups focused on data points. She stated the group was in the beginning stages of reviewing data, and offered a preliminary assessment that a lot of students were benefiting from EC (early college) or AP (advanced placement). Dr. Story noted the importance of fairness and equity in participation. She reported, another meeting would be held next week.

New Business.

Food Service Contract RFP (Assistant Superintendent Pfifferling) [Food Service Management Company Draft RFP.pdf](#).

Assistant Superintendent Pfifferling reviewed the DESE template which had been released two weeks ago and stipulated the several minor revisions: 1) 2024-2025 school year; 2) page 5 - exhibits need to be added; 3) page 12 - four references are needed; 4) page 15 - mandatory tour of our facilities on February 27, 2024 (still be to confirmed); 5) mandatory one-year contract, with two (2) one-year renewals, 6) no other specifications; 7) possibility food service company's responsibility to include executive chef training for the purpose of improving the quality of food (alt/add to contract); 9) page 35 notation for fresh fruits participation; 10) page 42 stated that invoicing will be handled by vendor; and 11) requirements for healthy benefits (minimum currently provided in present contract) chicken without non-therapeutic antibiotics, low sugar, low-sodium, hormone-free milk non-GMO among other criteria.

In response to Attorney Magliocchetti's inquiry on if the vote would be on the amended draft contract, the assistant superintendent replied that was correct and no further changes could be made to the contract template.

Assistant Superintendent Pfifferling respectfully asked for the committee's vote tonight.

A motion was made by Attorney Rosa to authorize the assistant superintendent to submit the amended food service contract RFP {if DESE allows the removal of the executive chef then that item would be removed from the document; if not, it would be included in the RFP}. Attorney Magliocchetti seconded the motion.

Attorney Magliocchetti made a friendly amendment to incorporate all the revisions in the food service contract RFP.

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

Ms. Collins	Yes	Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Yes
Ms. Diaz	Yes	Dr. Story	Yes
Ms. Ferguson	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Dr. Grannemann	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Mrs. Lalumiere	Yes	Mayor Barrett	Yes
Attorney Rosa	Yes		

11 members voted in the affirmative

Motion passes

0 members voted in the negative

0 members abstained

Superintendent's Recommendation to approve financial transfers [02-06-24 Budget Transfer Request.pdf](#), (crossing guards) as indicated in the agenda material.

A motion was made by Attorney Magliocchetti to approve the financial transfers. Ms. Sullivan seconded the motion. The mayor requested a roll call vote with the following results:

Ms. Collins	Yes	Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Yes
Ms. Diaz	Yes	Dr. Story	Yes
Ms. Ferguson	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Dr. Grannemann	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Mrs. Lalumiere	Yes	Mayor Barrett	Yes
Attorney Rosa	Yes		

11 members voted in the affirmative

Motion passes

0 members voted in the negative
0 members abstained

Superintendent's Recommendation to approve Warrant Number EV20240209 and EV20240209B totaling \$2,230,862.44 [Warrant EV20240209 and EV20240209B.pdf](#) as indicated in the agenda material.

Dr. Grannemann asked about page 8 expenditure in the amount \$188,630.

Superintendent Marotta answered the expenditure was for chrome books.

Mrs. Lalumiere asked about non-special education transportation included in the warrant documents.

Assistant Superintendent Pffiferling explained that there were the following: homeless, DCF, private and public day schools, in-town general education big bus, in-town mini-bus, in-town HPS (mostly special education), loop program, field trips, discovery club and athletics.

A motion was made by Attorney Magliocchetti to approve Warrant Number EV20240209 and EV20240209B totaling \$2,230,862.44. Ms. Sullivan seconded the motion. The mayor requested a roll call vote with the following results:

Ms. Collins	Yes	Mrs. Ryan-Ciardiello	Yes
Ms. Diaz	Yes	Dr. Story	Yes
Ms. Ferguson	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Dr. Grannemann	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Mrs. Lalumiere	Yes	Mayor Barrett	Yes
Attorney Rosa	Yes		

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

Motion passes

Superintendent's Recommendation to approve Warrant Number 20240209A totaling \$5,624.40 [Detailed Warrant EV20240209A.pdf](#) as indicated in the agenda material.

A motion was made by Attorney Rosa to approve Warrant Number 20240209A totaling \$5,624.40. Mrs. Ryan-Ciardiello seconded the motion. The mayor requested a roll call vote with the following results:

Ms. Collins	Yes	Mrs. Ryan-Ciardiello	Yes
Ms. Diaz	Yes	Dr. Story	Yes
Ms. Ferguson	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Dr. Grannemann	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Abstain
Mrs. Lalumiere	Yes	Mayor Barrett	Yes
Attorney Rosa	Yes		

10 members voted in the affirmative
0 members voted in the negative
1 member abstained

Motion passes

Items by Consensus.

Superintendent's Recommendation for Approval of the Hybrid Regular Meeting Minutes of January 25, 2024, [Final Edit for Approval Hybrid Regular Meeting Minutes 01.25.24 copy.pdf](#) and Approval of the Use of Facilities [UOF 02.08.24.pdf](#) as indicated in the agenda material.

A motion was made by Attorney Magliocchetti to approve the items by consensus. Ms. Sullivan seconded the motion. The mayor requested a roll call vote with the following results:

Ms. Collins	Yes	Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Yes
Ms. Diaz	Yes	Dr. Story	Yes
Ms. Ferguson	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Dr. Grannemann	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Mrs. Lalumiere	Yes	Mayor Barrett	Yes
Attorney Rosa	Yes		

11 members voted in the affirmative

Motion passes

0 members voted in the negative

0 members abstained

A motion was made by Attorney Magliocchetti to adjourn the meeting (9:53 pm). Attorney Rosa seconded the motion. The mayor requested a roll call vote with the following results:

Ms. Collins	Yes	Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Yes
Ms. Diaz	Yes	Dr. Story	Yes
Ms. Ferguson	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Dr. Grannemann	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Mrs. Lalumiere	Yes	Mayor Barrett	Yes
Attorney Rosa	Yes		

11 members voted in the affirmative

Motion passes

0 members voted in the negative

0 members abstained