

**Hopedale School Committee  
Minutes of the Meeting of  
Tuesday, September 7, 2021**

Members Present: Lisa Alberto, Chair  
Kristi Brytowski, Vice Chair  
Jennifer McKeon  
Alysia Butler  
Kaitlin Federico

Also Present: Karen Crebase, Superintendent  
Derek Atherton, Jr.-Sr. High School Principal  
Karen Cosgrove, Pupil Personnel Services Director  
Lynne Davis, School Accountant  
Brian Miller, Memorial School Principal  
Kristen Poisson, Bright Beginnings Center Principal  
Nora Hodgens, School Committee Representative/Student Council Co-Representative  
Gage Pavia, Student Council Co-Representative

The Superintendent and School Committee members met at 5:00 pm in the Draper Memorial Library at Hopedale Jr.-Sr. High School for a reception to welcome new professional staff.

The Chair called the regular meeting to order at 6:00 pm in the Media Center at the Jr.-Sr. High School, 25 Adin Street, Hopedale, Massachusetts, with a quorum present.

1. **Minutes of August 24, 2021** - Upon a motion by Mrs. Butler which was seconded by Mrs. Brytowski, the minutes of August 24, 2021 were unanimously approved by the members.
2. **Student Representatives' Report** - Nora Hodgens and Gage Pavia reported on recent and upcoming events, including the start of fall sports and student activities, Homecoming Weekend, a tea for new staff, the return to senior class traditions, and STUCO meetings and leadership opportunities.
3. **Superintendent's Comments** – The Superintendent reported that staff returned to the buildings on August 30, 2021. The Superintendent hosted a district-wide meeting to share the district's plans and direction for the 2021-2022 school year. The opening day for students in Grades 1 through 12 was August 31 and September 1 for students in preschool and kindergarten. Ms. Crebase reviewed the protocols in place to maintain student and staff health and safety. She also reviewed the number of current positive COVID cases, which are reported daily on the district website.
4. **Committee Response to Superintendent's Comments** - There were no comments from the members.
5. **Introduction of Student Representative** - The Superintendent and members of the Committee welcomed Nora Hodgens as Student Representative to the School Committee for the 2021-2022 school year.
6. **Financial Items**
  - **Monthly Reports of Accounts Payable Warrants:** The Committee reviewed recent warrant reports for FY22 as presented by Mrs. Davis. Upon a motion by Mrs. McKeon which was seconded by Mrs. Butler, the members unanimously voted to ratify the payment of four accounts payable warrants dated: August 12 and 26 (three), 2021 in the amount of \$150,732.25.

- **Monthly Reports of Payroll Warrants:** Upon a motion by Mrs. McKeon which was seconded by Mrs. Butler, the members unanimously voted to ratify the payment of two FY21 payroll warrants dated: August 12 and 26, 2021; and two FY22 warrants dated: August 12 and 26, 2021, in a total amount of \$ 516,110.50.
- **Monthly Budget Reports:** Mrs. Davis presented the monthly budget report.
- **Warrants for Signature:** There were no warrants distributed for signature.
- **Independent Accountant's Report for Year Ended June 30, 2020:** Mrs. Davis reviewed the audit statement for the DESE FY 2020 End-of-Year Report. She noted the auditor's findings and reported that they have been resolved.

**7. Committee on Policy:** The members reviewed the following policies for a Second Reading:

GBA - Equal Employment Opportunity

GBEA - Staff Ethics/Conflict of Interest

A brief discussion followed regarding the oversight of conflicts and the procedure for ensuring that actions are referred to appropriate parties. Upon a motion by Mrs. McKeon and seconded by Mrs. Brytowski, the Committee unanimously approved and adopted the policies.

**8. Agenda Items:**

- **Opening of Schools Report:** Mr. Atherton, Mr. Miller and Mrs. Poisson reported on the return of staff to their buildings on August 30th. All shared the enthusiasm and spirit of collaboration as staff prepared for the return of students. The principals shared the numbers of students enrolled, new staff hires and important upcoming dates. A brief discussion followed regarding the number of students enrolled in the junior high and Mr. Atherton confirmed that distancing protocols are being maintained.
- **Superintendent Goals:** The Superintendent shared her goal statement for the 2021-2022 school year in the areas of professional practice, student learning and district improvement. The three goals are aligned with the district strategic plan and include key actions and benchmarks to measure progress. A brief discussion followed regarding the use of ESSER funds to support social emotional learning and grade level content standards. It was recommended that the Superintendent also note her support for acceleration and enrichment activities.
- **School Committee Goals:** The Committee's goals from the previous year were presented for discussion and review. By consensus, the members updated the language for goals 4, 6 and 7 to appropriately reflect current situations. The revised goal statement will be reviewed for approval at the October meeting.
- **Test and Stay Program:** The Superintendent reviewed a new DESE program with the goal of keeping students in school if they are symptomatic or identified as a close contact. BinaxNOW rapid tests would be administered in school to students who would remain as long as they test negative, rather than being sent home. She briefly reviewed the state requirements to join the program, the benefits of participation, and the resources required to administer it successfully. Upon a motion by Mrs. Butler and seconded by Mrs. Brytowski, the members unanimously voted to direct the Superintendent to begin the initial application process for participation in the Test and Stay program, unless the district needs to make an irrevocable commitment. In the meantime, Ms. Crebase will contact other districts that are considering the program and distribute a survey to families regarding their interest in the program.

**9. Correspondence** – The members reviewed the At A Glance brochure which the Superintendent distributed to staff on their opening day.

10. **Audience to Citizens** – A discussion was held between resident Kate Guertin and the Committee regarding the potential benefits of the Test and Stay program and clarification of the district's close contact protocol.

The next meeting of the Committee will be October 5, 2021 at 6:00 pm.

**Adjourn to Executive Session-** The Chair announced the need to enter executive session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation since an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body. Upon a motion by Mrs. Butler and seconded by Mrs. Brytowski, the members voted by roll call vote to enter executive session for the stated purpose as follows: Mrs. Alberto-yes; Mrs. Brytowski- yes; Mrs. McKeon-yes; Mrs. Federico-yes; and Mrs. Butler-yes. The Chair stated that the Committee would not be reconvening in public session and declared the meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeanne McGuane, Recording Secretary  
APPROVED: October 5, 2021