

Hancock School Committee Meeting Minutes  
August 4, 2026

Present: Jim Rodda, Elisa Kryskow, Kayt Turner, Ana Bradbury

Absent: Bruce Weiner

Also Present: Jay Merselis (principal), Rebecca Phillips (superintendent),

- 1) Call to order: Kayt called the meeting to order at 6:14pm
- 2) Public Concerns: None
- 3) Correspondence: If you have not yet been sworn in, please do so asap
- 4) Review and approval of 6/2/26 minutes: Jim motions to accept the 6/2 minutes. Kayt - 2nd. All in favor, no discussion.
- 5) Principals Report:
  - 1) Accolades and happenings:
    - 1) Summer program with Mrs. LeBarron went extraordinarily well with great turnout and excellent student behavior. Meals were included (2 hot meals, 2 cold meals, extra food still does not go to waste; goes to pigs)
  - 2) Summer Updates:
    - 1) Optional Summer Development: 25% of the staff has taken part. Informal topics for discussion and brainstorming
  - 3) Planning for 2026-2027
    - 1) Final MCAS results have not been released, but we do have spreadsheets ready for when data comes. We do have some access to raw data, but overall that isn't particularly helpful.
    - 2) End of year reporting (rolling over student management system, schedules, etc.) has been accomplished.
  - 4) Enrollment
    - 1) Opening the school with 39 students. This is a few less than expected: two families of 3 year olds have opted to keep their kids home for another year; another child splits time between Williamstown and Hancock and due to logistics family decided WES.
    - 1) 4 school choice students (3 in 3rd grade and 1 in 5th grade). PreK - 2 out of state, 2 Hancock. 5 inquiries over the summer about K-2 aged school choice.
  - 5) Building Projects:
    - 1) Roof: will be repaired enough to make it through the winter; looking into grants for a full replacement, researching vendors, etc.
    - 2) Floors are being cleaned now, which is better timing for staff to get their rooms ready without a huge rush at the end of the summer
    - 3) Plumbing: maintenance room sink has been un-clogged. One toilet to be replaced.
    - 4) Playground mulch is coming; 1 truckload with 60 yards
    - 5) 3 quotes for replacing exterior fire exit doors that have gaps in them. TBD if this is a school budget or town budget responsibility.
  - 6) Upcoming Events:
    - 1) Aug 24-25: Staff PD days
    - 2) Aug 26: First Day of School
    - 3) Sept 1: voting, no school. School Committee Meeting
  - 7) Misc: "little library" has had some use without issue.
- 6) Superintendent's Report:
  - 1) Home Rule Bill update: Rebecca spoke to Rep Barrett last week. We have two bills in the system- the primary bill they encouraged us to write which included all 8 districts with the same concern and the secondary, standalone bill related to Hancock (kept as a backup). Bills are split into two categories: major v minor policy change. Rep Barrett

stated, “some attorneys got involved and tagged it as a major policy change.” Rep Barrett called on Thursday and convinced them it is not a major policy shift and thus can stay in the informal policy review ultimately staying in the system until Dec 2026. If not moved to policy before EOY deadline, bill will be dead in the water and we will have to start this process all over again. Rebecca communicated the importance that this bill go through before then (doesn’t have to be before the start of this school year although that would be ideal from a budget standpoint [and especially challenging for the 1 out of district student that would be affected]).

- 2) Staff Handbook: Review, Discussion and Vote
  - 1) Changes around employee cell phone use around students.
  - 2) Tightened up personal leave language (what is it/for) clarity.
  - 3) Kayt makes a motion to accept the changes to the Employee Handbook. Elisa - 2nd. All in favor, no discussion.
- 3) Student Handbook: Review, Discussion and Vote
  - 1) Changing dates to '26-27 header.
  - 2) Discipline of students with Disabilities: specific details around requirements of the school when a student is suspended for 10 days or more.
  - 3) Special Education: “Child Find” expansion of finding and consultation for home schooled children. Evaluation of suspicion of a disability.
  - 4) Independent Education Evaluation and rules surrounding this. On a voluntary basis we can do an income-based cost-sharing process.
  - 5) Jim made a motion to pass the changes to the Student Handbook including the date changes to the header. Kayt- 2nd. All in favor, no discussion.
- 4) Staffing: all positions are filled
- 5) Non-Op approval: paperwork filled out indicating that we do not have a High School. Waived to have no physical school for grades 7-12. Tuition for South Hancock students to go to Richmond.
- 6) Budget Sub Committee
  - 1) Changing name to “Advisory Finance Sub Committee.”
  - 2) Identify two committee members to attend a discussion and planning meeting prior to next School Committee meeting for goals and purposes.
    - 1) Kayt will head this, Bruce will be second person by default, Jim available for questions.
- 7) Special Education Director Report:
  - 1) SPED and Civil Rights Audit went really well. Feedback was impressive. No findings, out of 70+ areas that were looked at. Had 3 “pre-findings” due specifically to policy and procedure findings = these were directly handled through the language changes in the Handbooks referenced above. “Best written and most thorough IEPs [auditor] has seen in a long time.” Spoke highly of MTSS and Tiered Intervention Program. Weekly meetings with every teacher + SPED added to additional positive feedback.
  - 2) SPED Strategies: DESE contracted with this group to identify schools that may need additional support. Why us? Three reasons: 1) MCAS results from '23-'24 school year: 2 students on IEPs in the 4th grade that did not meet standards. 2) Same year, felt we did not have a high enough percentage of SPED students in gen-ed 80% of the time. 3 students total, all of whom had very significant needs. 3) Tagged because we had two PreK students on IEPs whose parents chose to home school them (and we provided in home services for them!). Magnifies small numbers and how that can affect percentages. After Rebecca’s work with them it has been determined that we do not need further support from them.
  - 3) Demographics: 7 students on IEPs (2 students are only on related services IEPs (speech, OT); 5 academic)
- 8) Financial Report Review:
  - 1) SPED transportation:

- 2) King Gray (was \$480/day last year. This year is \$520/day). Instead Rebecca found Bianca's Transportation - \$360/day! This will help us save \$15,200 on the SPED transportation line.
- 3) Bus Bids: put in 5% increase, ended up being 6.1% increase = +\$1,971
- 4) Now that the teacher's contract is settled: shortfalls of ~\$5970 teacher line, counselor \$924, nurse \$2018, SPED \$7070
  - 1) Circuit breaker \$144,000 will be eaten up by SPED transportation, SPED tuition, specialized adult for out-placed student.
- 9) New Business:
  - 1) December 1 School Committee Meeting date has been changed to November 30th.
- 10) Adjournment: Kayt motioned to adjourn at 7:15, Elisa - 2nd. All in favor.