

## MINUTES

Hoosac Valley Regional School Committee  
School Committee Meeting  
Monday, December 5, 2022 - 6:30 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Mike Mucci, John Duval, Mike Henault, Erin Milne

**ABSENT:** Regina Hill, Adam Emerson, Bethany DeMarco

**OTHERS:** Superintendent Aaron Dean, Eric Beaulac, Lisa Lesser, Christopher Sposato, Bridget O'Neil-Hopkins, Colleen Byrd, Regina Diesz  
Kristen Palatt

---

**103991 Call to Order**

Chairman Mike Mucci called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**103992 Public Comment or Questions - None**

**103994 Approval of Minutes - November 7, 2022**

**MOTION:** On Motion of John Duval and second by Mike Henault:

VOTED: to approve the November 7, 2022 minutes. The vote was 3-0-1.

**103995 Report of Treasurer/Business Manager - None**

**103996 Report of Sub Committee - None**

**103997 Communications -**

A. Presentation of School Improvement Plan - Principals and Assistant Principals introduced themselves and presented their plans. The focus is on further developing or deepening the rigor of these strategic objects and action steps from the 2021- 2022 SIP. The same strategic objectives, building on each one from last year instead of introducing new concepts.

Strategic Objective 1: Staff will implement new curriculum(s) with integrity and analyze impact on student learning through the use of the FAR cycle and Fastbridge data collection. Erin Beaulac & Lisa Lesser: Last year we implemented 3 new ELA curriculums as well as the first real full year of in person curriculum with our math program which is Eureka. Offering PD to all staff to get trained in those programs. Started the work with our far cycle talking about learning targets and formative assessment making sure those are present in all of our classrooms and instruction. Lisa Lesser: this year is a continuation, meet with all grade level teams 2x weekly to go through the curriculum. Trying to move forward with ILT members to facilitate these meetings. Also working with ILT to bring in some productive talk strategies to increase student discourse within the classroom. For Professional Development, we will continue to use our consultants for Wit and Wisdom to do some of our faculty meeting time to support our staff and make sure they are comfortable with the curriculum and for new staff we are putting them in the training for all of the new curriculum. Learning targets and formative assessment: we are continuing to analyze our learning targets, we do this by walkthroughs, looking at the learning task and making sure it is aligned with the learning targets and bringing this back to curriculum meetings with the teams to make sure we are all talking the same language. Bridget O'Neil-Hopkins: doing similar things, last year started work the teams works and far cycle, didn't get off the ground as seamlessly as we would have liked, at all grade levels, this year this we have 2x weekly common planning time that is facilitated by Bridget and the instructional coach where we go through the far cycle process on a biweekly basis, planning for our formatives and analyzing student data and we do this biweekly as well as additional 1:1 coaching with myself and our instructional coach, Last year, we did walkthroughs and we are looking to refine our practice and firm up our tools we use as well as provide more

targeted feedback that we can immediately implement. Colleen Byrd: teams and far cycle we are going to be focusing on data driven dialogue school wide getting student work on the table and taking a look at that. Last year the 8th grade team did a lot of work around the far cycle and now we need to imbed that in grades 9 - 12. Walk throughs are continuing at the high school, we had great success with our AP of teaching and learning going in and out of classroom on a regular basis, along with the instructional coach and the rest of the administration team, the added layer this year is we would like to get the ILT back into that rotation going in and out of the classrooms and then having that extend out into department meetings. Curriculum we did start the HMM in English and then Eureka math in 8th grade. Map aligning is something we are constantly taking a look at. 2x per year of growth measure and fidelity of implementation of curriculum and for the future we are looking at other curriculums for the high school.

Mike Henaut: walkthroughs at the middle and high school- are they focused on fidelity of implementation of the curriculum or are they tied to instructional practices that you are supporting with P.D? Colleen: we are looking at both, our walk through tool we are using this year and the same as last year, looking at best teaching practices, focusing on learning targets, success criteria, how those are being used, whether or not they are tied to the standards tied to the learning targets, looking at what the students are doing, focusing on engagement as well.

Objective 2: Hoosac Valley Regional School District promotes the learning and growth of all students through instructional practices that establish high expectations, create a safe and effective classroom environment, and demonstrate cultural proficiency. Erin Beaulac: last year we started setting high expectations for staff and students and one way of doing that was taking a new curriculum making sure we were using the language and routine rituals from the programs in prek-3 and in doing that starting to notice our observations commonalities amongst the grade levels. Fastbridge data groups - last year we trained all staff in how to analyze reports, how to administer progress monitoring, we had a couple of data meetings, a couple of faculty meetings dedicated to it and then we had our classroom teachers meet with reading and math interventionist to analyze data as well, just to start the conversation as to what it looks like. Responsive Classroom: Last year, the elementary school was going in the direction of responsive classrooms, we had a committee that was voluntary. They went to a one day training and they helped us get responsive classroom language and modeling started, this year is when we saw a huge undertaking, got our entire staff involved in R.C. This is a building-wide expectation that we have the same language, same processes, behavioral expectations, we have more meetings built into every schedule. It is a huge shift and because of the way PD was mapped out, the training wasn't all given when school first started, but now we are able to receive a training from a consultant and practice that, go to the next training and practice that. We see a huge difference in our students' behavior, our staff approaching our students differently. We have really seen an impact immediately. Cultural Diversity - last year we implemented PRIDE. That was a great way to start our building wide expectation and we touched into cultural diversity just through PRIDE last year. We are going to have 2 faculty meetings dedicated to DEI work. We are continuing our pride work and highlight each tenant of pride to help us with that work. Our 2nd and 3rd grade teams are collaborating doing activities with students about what holidays look like in different cultures.

Chris Sposato: started last year doing pride with the rallies, a big ask to our staff to join in and participate but they have as much fun as the staff do. Emphasizing certain praise instead of just giving them a lightning bolt, getting better about the language that is being used. Outside presenters last year, had DEI presenters come in we had some biased training for faculty and want to make sure that we are bringing these resources to our staff when they are talking to the students. SEL WIn block - each grade level has a dedicated block where there are people that can provide intervention and enrichments to students when they need it. The student Support center is working better than it has ever worked. We have a paraprofessional, Melissa Turozcy, that is stellar in running that program. We have the right person in the right position. The Dean of Students and School Adjustment Counselors room have been moved near the SSC. They work very well together. Panorama - been in the district, but we have not used it well at the middle school. This year is going better, but we still have a ways to go.

Mike Henaut: Is the student support center accessible proactively or is it for punitive measures? Can a student seeking support or a teacher knowing a student needs support can that student get into SSC? Yes, we prefer it to be proactive, if a student is anxious or stressed out, they can request from the teacher to go to SSC. The teacher will assess the situation using their professional judgment. We also have students that have regularly scheduled breaks.

Colleen Byrd: Restorative Practice - just opened SSC and hired a teacher of deportment to run the center - trying to model off what the middle school is doing. We are going to collect data and what we might want to do next year - We have identified students who really need extra support and we are building plans for the students, met with the Counselors, Deans, etc. and getting support for them. Regina Diesz: took an entire faculty meeting to get ideas from the teachers about what the ideal SSC would look like - instead of the administration saying this is how it is going to work, it was great getting input from the teachers. This will also help the teachers as well. It has been going really well and a lot of suggestions from teachers are put into play. Mike Henault: what are the ultimate outcome measures for the success of the SSC? Colleen: Our goal in the SIP is 20% decrease for referrals to the main office. Trying to reduce

referrals coming through powerschool and increase student engagement and time in the classrooms. Along those lines, we are also using panorama, using it regularly and what the teachers have been told is that panorama can be used for evidence for evaluation and in panorama it can be used as part of the RTI, we also noticed that when a teacher puts in a referral in powerschool, and the administration updates it, that information also shows up in panorama under the student's profile. It's a great place to store information and then go back for checks and balances. That information goes out to parents along with the fastbridge information. Mike Henault: heard a lot about fastbridge over the years and when Kristen presented the MCAS results in September we talked about fastbridge and how it was not predictive of the results, surprised by the results in September, we put a lot of weight in the benchmarking schedule and forming intervention groups - doing a lot of great work, are we sure that the data we are using safeguards are built in if we are not using it right? Fastbridge hasn't been approved by DESE as a universal screener, and they are overlooking fastbridge. We put in a lot of resources and training. Are we thinking about that? Kristen: yes, really disappointed when looking at the comparison, at elementary level in addition to fastbridge as a screener we did a QPS on every student; at middle school met with ILT talked about embedding standards based assessments, using either old MCAS, etc. definitely having those conversations, not saying we found the perfection solutions at any level.

John Duval: SSC - can it get overwhelmed with too many students at one time? Colleen: not yet, made it at the high school so students can't self refer. Teachers are creating DCAPS and working with students needing extra support in the classroom.

Objective 3: Faculty/staff/administration will create, implement, and/or host a variety of communication strategies in order to support the mission of the district. Erin Beaulac: Our staff strengths are that every teacher wants to get parents in - having family events - building traditions at our school - like pie parties, musical bingo, mostly connected to Title 1 so that there is an academic piece, trying to build a stronger connection with curriculum and fun events. Regular communication - sending out weekly messages giving up dates on school - student pride shout out of the week, when a staff member nominates a student. Conferences - continue conferences, transportation offerings - conferences were very well attended - also able to offer them on zoom, largely very successful.

Bridget O'Neil-Hopkins: - similar things going on - Chris sent out a weekly family quick notes, all sorts of updates, happenings in the school - last year we also included academic notes and tips for parents, adding information on mental health - teachers sending home monthly newsletter - send home regular updates on fastbridge testing - in the process of creating middle school traditions that we haven't had in the past. Increasing the amount of family engagement opportunities we have at the school.

Chris Spasato gave a shout out to Bridget for stepping in during his absence.

Colleen Byrd: Weekly word from Byrd - doing a fun day for students on half days - heard from the students and teachers and we need to re energize at the high school - trying to deepen the mentor relationships - attendance on half days - attendance was much better - 3 principles trying something new this year - historically we have low attendance with week leading up to vacation - joining forces and doing a spirit week for the whole district - a little competition - a fun way to get parents and community involved just a way to make connections from Pre-k - 12 - trying it out - see how it goes.

Aaron Dean: You have 3 very dense documents in front of you - the work we are doing is very complex, updating curriculum, supporting staff, and students making connections with our community - these are all important pieces to our work. The goals are directed with our DIP - building consistency and a lot of traditions for the district. Hope you can see the connection and how well our team works together. Everyone is stepping up and working collaboratively - shoutout to the team and to Kristen for all of this work and to make sure goals align and have measurable goals. We know what the starting points are and we can track our progress.

Recommend taking the SIP plans reviewing it and at the next meeting ask questions, suggestions, etc. and vote on it.

Mike Henault: impressed by the actual vertical alignment it is really consistent in how the goals are being tackled Prek- 12 - to see this team and how they are interacting with us and yourselves and it comes out in the work and can only be great for the district. Erin Milne: asked where to direct questions? Aaron: either him or Kristen Palatt.

Colleen Byrd introduced Sam Loholdt - school council member to the School Committee. Sam asked a variety of questions to the principals regarding fastbridge, low school pride, community involvement. Colleen will meet with school council to discuss various ideas the high school is planning.

Mike Mucci thanked the Principals, AP, Kristen for all their hard work.

**103998 Report of Superintendent -**

**A. Approval of District Improvement Plan** - took the feedback and adjusted some of the goals - made a more quantifiable goal - made connections to fastbridge even though we are assessing that piece. MCAS - our accountability systems and need to make some strides on that - made a connection close to the SIP plan - this is a live document - has links to resources, rubrics, professional learning experiences and it will be posted on the website so people can see this is the work we are doing.

John Duval: DEI committee what is the timeline? Aaron: going to do it through the policy subcommittee - hope to get it up and running in January

**MOTION:** Mike Henault and second by John Duval:

VOTED: accept the DIP as updated. The vote was unanimous.

**B. Middle School work with the Center for School & District Partnership -**

Aaron: started work at the middle for the Center through dese - MCAS number dictated we are under some sort of motoring. Utilizing the math side - what do staff need in terms of content knowledge, the layout of curriculum and how it works and utilizing the coaching from the state - looking at current curriculum delivery, teaching practices, from there we will develop a plan to coach and support staff. On The ELA side - implemented it last year - selected the math side because we hadn't looked too deeply - we have high quality support coming in and a \$25,000 grant to support this.

In addition - We received a \$150,000 grant for SEL from the state looking at how to further support the programming we already have in place. It is for all three schools -

**103998 Chairman's Report - None**

**103999 Unfinished Business - None**

**104000 New Business: - None**

**104001 Action Items - None**

**104002 For the Good of the Order -**

John: family community engagement - trunk or trunk - veterans day parade - hearing a lot of positives about these events.

Mike Mucci - Town of Cheshire - tree lighting, hayrides - looks like a lot of fun - the town did turn on the Christmas lights for us tonight to look at, down the hall. Different agencies did their own trees.

Erin Milne: last meeting before break and wishing everyone a happy and healthy holiday season

**MOTION:** On Motion of Mike Henault and second by John Duval:

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 7:38 p.m. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Aaron Dean, Superintendent

Lisa Bresett, Recording Secretary