

Hollis School District Renovation and Expansion Committee (HREC)

October 6, 2026
3:20-4:50pm
Location: HPS MPR

MEMBERS:

MEMBERS:	PRESENT:
Anne Wake-DePasquale, HREC Chair, Hollis School Board	X
Gina Bergskaug, HSD Superintendent	X
Paula Izbicki, HPS Principal	X
Lance Finnemore, SAU41 Facilities Director	Absent
Ellen Roos-Unger, HPS Teacher Representative	Absent
Julia Piskorski, Parent Representative, Communications Liaison	X
Anastasyia Esposito, Parent Representative, Communications Liaison, HREC Secretary	Participated by phone at 4:15
Tom Enright, Community Representative	X
Ada Stevens, Community Representative	X
Julie Spence, Professional Volunteer	X
Mike Leavitt, Hollis Budget Committee and Planning Board Representative	X
Raphael Zack, HSB alternate representative, Hollis Budget Committee, Capital Advisory Expenditures Committee	Absent

Four Hollis residents were also in attendance.

AGENDA

I. Welcome

- A. Overview of Agenda
 - 1. Overarching goals:
 - a) Discuss committee questions and concerns based upon the responses of the resident and staff surveys.
 - b) Utilize committee discussion to determine next steps
- B. Agenda Adjustment: Lauren DiGennaro, Asst. Superintendent over Student Services, will not be attending today, but will be attending on the October 19th meeting.

II. Updates

- A. [Enrollment Report](#) (Paula)
 - 1. Paula– Increase by 1 each in Kindergarten and 2nd grade since the last report.

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- a) Mike-noticed that there have been ups and downs over the last couple months. Is this normal?

(1) Paula-In the beginning of the year, yes, but numbers usually stabilize around October-November. There are multiple factors that influence the fluctuation in numbers: homeschooling/EFA's, and parents switching in or out of private schooling

(2) Mike-noted overall decrease over the last 4 years.

B. Communications Liaisons Report (Julia)

1. Waited to report until after Stacy could join via call in. Stacy was able to call in at 4:15 and reported with Julia at 4:22:

2. Stacy-Asked about the possibility of a committee newsletter for the public

a) Anne answered that per Gina, we cannot do a newsletter as it could be perceived as biased or as electioneering. Therefore, Administration, School Board, and Board Committees, like HREC, cannot put out newsletters. Official communication should direct people to the website where all information is vetted and approved by the committee. As an individual citizen, though, committee members can direct residents to the site, write articles, send updates, etc. These newsletters just cannot be officially from HREC; that is why residents who sign up for email updates are directed to the site for new documents posted.

b) (Stacy/Julia) Asked, as Communications Liaisons, to take over sending out announcements. Anne thanked them. Asked for access to the FAQ collection document. Anne will share this document so they can see the responses.

c) Stacy-Expressed unease with FAQ collection document as a means to submit a question; concerned that residents will not be getting a response.

(1) Julie-It would be difficult to have one person responsible for answering every question submitted.

(2) Anne-most questions asked require responses that need to be directed to the appropriate person and/or require data gathering that needs to be found and verified for accuracy. With the HEC, questions for the FAQ documents were gleaned from public forums, responses were written collaboratively with the appropriate people, and then responses were read and approved by the committee before being posted.

d) Stacy-Concerned about having a "game plan" for the FAQ collection

(1) Anne-We will use the same process as with the HEC. By discussing the survey and collecting questions, we are

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preparing for creating a FAQ page. We can add a review of questions for the FAQ page as an agenda item for the next meeting.

- e) Julia-A survey in January asking whether people have had their questions answered could be helpful
 - (1) Anne-Yes, that is a great idea.
 - (2) Julie-By then we should have a draft list of questions
- f) Nicole (resident in attendance)- Perhaps consider the use of AI in responding to questions using the information and data that is already available on the public sites.

C. Sitework Subcommittee Report (Tom, Lance, Mike)

- 1. Tom-Began site analysis with septic:
 - a) Determined there is currently no stress on the septic despite being about 30yrs, old.
 - b) Lance regularly inspects all SAU septic systems annually and there have been no concerning indicators of potential failure.
 - c) HPS system has 2 leechfields pumping alternately. This means that is one were to fail, load to the other could be increased, giving time to fix the problem before a crisis.
 - d) There are no trees near either leechfield. Trees are the typical culprits in damaged septic systems.
 - e) Therefore, we can afford to wait on the updated septic system/parking lot
- 2. Tom cont'd-With no parking lot where current leechfield is, better to put a parking lot and traffic pattern off site on the SAU field/parking area.
 - a) Anticipated this would allow the stacking of more cars than the 2026 proposed plan offered (~60)
 - b) Regarding the bridge over wetlands, although the HEC was advised against a vehicular bridge here as cost and time prohibitive, Tom, Lance, and Mike feel it would be a fairly easy fix with a culvert and dredge and fill (stone), similar to the solution at the high school around its wetlands. Dredge and fill permits are common and fairly easy to obtain.
 - c) Tom proposes the following steps be taken:
 - (1) Get Paula's input on offsite stacking for drop off/ pickup.
 - (2) Physically look at the two leach fields to confirm that neither leach field shows stress
 - (3) Talk to last year's site engineer to see if there is push back on today's site discussion
 - (4) Talk to the town planner to see what role the town thinks it should play in the site review.
 - d) Paula-SAU field/lot to HPS site is fine with her.

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- e) Anne-Outlined the process we are in now with the consultants. At the last meeting we set a scope of work. Gina has shared that with Banwell and they have given her a fee proposal. That proposal will be shared with the Hollis School Board at tomorrow's meeting (October 8th). The HSB will approve or deny the request for funds. If approved, we can get Tom, Lance and Mike talking to the engineers.
- D. Consultants (Gina)--Gina not present. Update at the 10/19 meeting.
- E. Pharmacy: Anne and Tom, October 15, 2026 at 9:00am
 - 1. Residents in the survey and in person have expressed an interest in the committee exploring off-site locations in town for the PreK, specifically the empty pharmacy building has come up over the past two years (this was explored too by the former Superintendent, but not extensively discussed at that time in 2024).
 - 2. Anne and Tom (who is a retired real estate lawyer) have an appointment to tour the pharmacy and obtain information on the property. They will report out what they discover at the 10/19 meeting.
- F. Farley: **tentatively** October 16, 2026 (Anne, Julie, Fire Marshall, Farley Rep.)
 - 1. Anne-Many residents still want the Farley building explored as a place for the PreK and possibly K, and for SAU office space. Julie (architect by profession) will look at the plans of the building in Town Hall and the Fire Marshall has confirmed she is available to be present to answer questions and to even provide a tour of the building. Once this appointment is confirmed (Anne awaiting final response from Town Hall), Anne will reach out to former Farley Committee members so an expert on the building is available for questions too.
 - a) Mike-can attend, is a member of the Farley Committee (Mike is also a retired engineer by profession)
 - b) Anne will update when appointment is confirmed. A report will be given to the committee at the 10/19 meeting.

III. Public Comments and Questions

- A. Nicole-Asked about when the HBHS was built there were two committees: one for working on the project, another for communication. Is there a timeline for doing something similar with this project?
 - 1. Tom-We learned along the way. That happened at about year 3. It took five years and 4 votes to pass.
 - 2. Anne-This project is much smaller in scale (totally new construction vs. reno and expansion), so Stacy and Julia volunteered to take on communication as Communications Officers.
- B. Chelsea-Will the Pharmacy Tour and Farley tour be open to the public? Will minutes be taken?
 - 1. Julie-these are more like work sessions than meetings

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2. Anne- These are for Committee members, but the information gathered from these sessions will be reported at the 10/19 meeting.
- C. Dave-It seems like we are looking for more classroom space, but I am not convinced all of this space is necessary. Shouldn't we consider that more families are homeschooling? Is there data on this? How is population data considered?
 1. Anne—we will be addressing much of this shortly in the Discussion section of the agenda.

IV. Old Business

- A. [September 21, 2026 draft meeting minutes](#) –APPROVED

V. Discussion

- A. Began discussion of [Resident](#) and [HPS Staff](#) Survey results ([HREC Secretary's analysis](#), [Resident Free Responses](#); [Staff Free Responses](#))
 1. First topic: Classrooms and Class size
 - a) Ada-taking the October Enrollment report numbers, if we apply the current policy for class sizes, we should get:
 - (1) K 90 students div by 18 = 5 classes of 18 18 18 18 18
 - (2) 1st. 91 students div by 18 = 5 classes of 18 18 18 18 19
 - (3) 2nd 77 students div by 20 = 4 classes of 19 19 19 20
 - (4) 3rd 95 students div by 20 = 5 classes of 19 19 19 19 19
 - (5) TOTAL classrooms 19
 - (6) Currently, 22 are being used. We can pick up 3 classrooms by following the current policy.
 - b) Julie-Recommendations from the state say rooms can have up to 25 to give schools leeway, but sets the target at 20. The policy set by the board is reasonable.
 - c) Ada-not arguing the policy, but why aren't we following the policy?
 - d) Paula-Determining the number of classrooms also means projecting the number of teachers; this is tricky because planning for the next year begins the July before (i.e. for the current 2026-27 school year, or "FY27," the admin had to start planning in July 2025)
 - (1) Multiple factors to consider in addition to NESDEC projections:
 - (a) Rooms on 2nd grade and 3rd grade floors are not helpful due to the fire code requiring PreK-1st grade on floors with direct, flat egresses
 - (b) Physical sizes of classrooms vary greatly and are under modern standards
 - (c) Number of adults that need to be in the classrooms
 - (d) Note: we are above the state average for class sizes

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- (e) Research on class sizes is not always helpful for our demographic. It is true that most say that number of students does not make a huge impact most of the time, except for in Kindergarten through second grade students when building the foundation for literacy and math skills. This is from research by Reading Rockets. (Paula will share the article after the meeting, which can be found [HERE](#)).
 - (f) Policy committee will discuss class sizes again at the next meeting: October 26, 2026, 11am-12pm, HUES. Note: attendees may listen, but are not allowed to speak at Policy meetings.
- e) Julie-noted NESDEC is the national gold standard and should be used. Looking at its accuracy grade level to grade level is not always helpful. Better to look at the trends that NESDEC identifies overall, which tends to be fairly accurate.
 - f) Julia-Asked Paula to clarify “transience” of students at HPS.
 - (1) Paula-not as in moving residence, but transience between public and homeschooling, and/or public and private schools. At these young ages, many parents are still trying to explore their choices and determine what is best for their children.
- 2. At this time, 4:00, Ada had to leave.
 - 3. Anne-Asked to go back to the data and policy observations that Ada shared. A resident might see the 15 students per class in K and ask why not fill those rooms to the 18 allowed by policy.
 - a) Paula-Kindergarten is the hardest grade to predict. There is less variance and fluctuation in the older grades and we pretty much know what we are getting after 2nd or 3rd grade, but Kindergarten presents the challenge of weighing whether to cut a teacher who is a known commodity, or cut that teacher and risk having to hire an unknown at the last minute because registrations continue until just before school starts.
 - 4. Tom-Feels this conversation should include a discussion of Student Services. At all grades, particularly at lower grades, there are more students with special needs and these students are best served in smaller classes. Having fewer students in the classroom is best for these students, so it is in the best interest of the taxpayers because that saves them money. Therefore the smaller class sizes are justified.
 - a) Paula-Our students special needs are fully integrated into the classroom because we must provide them the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). This impacts the number of adults that need

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to be in the classroom (students with significant needs may require more adult support)

b) Julie-supported what Tom said about doing what is in the best interest of students is also in the best interest of the taxpayers.

c) Anne-Asked for elaboration on that viewpoint

(1) Tom-speaking from memory from when this was discussed years ago, if a child with significant needs is sent out we pay a lot in transportation services alone. Then there is the cost of the teacher and tuition, and these schools are not cheap. It is less expensive to educate the students here.

(2) Mike-remembered that an effort was made not many years ago to update rooms and equipment in the building so that we could provide services here and that was a cost-saving measure.

(3) Paula confirmed Mike's memory

(4) Tom-When there was more space, we were able to tuition in kids from other towns who wanted our services. We need the space.

5. At this time (4:20), Paula and Tom had to leave.

VI. Public Comments and Questions

A. Chelsea-Has the Farley Committee been notified or invited to the session looking at the Farley plans?

1. Anne-Still awaiting final confirmation from Town Hall about date and time, then will reach out; however, at least one member has been notified that this was to happen about this time in October

2. Mike-Reminded the group that he is also a member of the Farley committee and is happy to attend as well.

3. Anne-that would be especially beneficial because of Mike's engineering background.

B. Dave- Not moved by the statement and data reference that we have larger than average class sizes in NH. He has seen conflicting data and he cautions the committee against cherry-picking data. Some towns in NH are very small, should we be comparing ourselves with them? Aren't our class sizes the smallest in the country? We should be comparing ourselves with similarly-sized towns so the comparison is more apples to apples.

1. Mike-Regardless of national averages, we have to adhere to NH standards.

2. Julia-it is true that some small towns combine grade levels in one classroom, making comparison faulty.

3. Anne-I agree we should avoid these kinds of comparisons and make the conversation more about what works in our unique situation with our children. Our school is older, so it is particular in that there is a wide range of physical class room sizes. Even NH targets and maximums are based

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upon a modern standard assuming 900sq.ft. for most classrooms and 1000 sq. ft. for kindergarten.

4. Nicole-is there a minimum number of sq. ft. allowed?
 - a) Julie-yes, the occupancy load which is determined by whether that number of people can get out for a fire, but its not based on what's best for education
 - b) Anne-Life code doesn't offer much help because it states 20 sq. ft. per person, so that would mean 50 kindergarteners in an 1000 sq. ft. classroom, which does not sound reasonable. It is possible with the variance in our school that we need to determine what is an acceptable number of sq. ft. per child in our school, for our children.
 - c) Nicole-Also concerned that the conversation is so often around the number of children in a classroom, but not about the quality of the room like the interior rooms with no windows.

VII. Closing

- A. At this time, 4:47, the few remaining members agreed to adjourn.
- B. Next HSB regular meeting **October 7, 6pm, HUES cafeteria**
- C. Next HREC Meeting:**October 19, 2026 at 3:20, HPS MPR**

Minutes today taken by Anne Wake-DePasquale

Useful Links For Quick Reference and Research:

[HREC Files Google Drive Folder](#)

[Hollis Enrollment Committee webpage](#)

[HPS Proposed Renovation and Expansion page \(2026\)](#)

[HSD Projected Enrollment FY27 HPS and HUES](#)

[SAU41 Enrollment Projections based on 3 year running average](#)

[NESDEC FALL 2025 ENROLLMENT REPORT](#)

[Hollis Demographics and Housing Report](#)

[NESDEC Hollis Historical Enrollment](#)

[Hollis, NH Population by Year](#)

[School Fire and Safety Inspection Checklist](#)