



March 23, 2021

Dear HPS Families,

Thank you to those of you who were able to attend last night's School Committee meeting, which included an update on the status on a Memorandum of Agreement with the Hingham Education Association (HEA) Unit A (teachers) regarding the reopening of schools for the 2020-2021 school year. Weekly meetings with the HEA, Administration, and SC Salary & Negotiations Subcommittee continue to be held as we negotiate the working conditions for the full return of students. We also received updates on the District health metrics, the recommendation by the Education Subcommittee for the 2021-22 school budget, and preliminary results of focus groups conducted by the high school Athletic Department. Additional details are outlined below and a full recording of the meeting will be available on the [Harbor Media School Committee playlist](#).

Please see the end of this email for a list of upcoming meetings (including two tonight). This year's town and school department budgets are especially important as our students and families begin to recover from the significant academic and emotional disruption caused by COVID-19, so continued community involvement is welcomed and appreciated.

March 22 School Committee Meeting Highlights

The School Committee (Committee) did not take a vote on the Memorandum of Agreement with the Hingham Education Association (HEA) Unit A (teachers) regarding the Administration's [proposal to increase in-person learning](#) presented at the March 15 School Committee meeting because there are additional details to work through with the HEA with respect to working conditions.

- The re-opening timeline as presented by Dr. Austin on March 15 is not subject to collective bargaining. This means that the HPS community should proceed and plan according to the timeline presented in the proposal.
- Working conditions, which can include subjects such as schedules, personal protective equipment (PPE), and distancing between students and staff are subject to collective bargaining.
- The School Committee values the input and experience of our teachers and is committed to working through these issues in good faith with the HEA negotiating team.

Superintendent's Report:

- Dr. Austin gave an update on the [District health metrics](#) and the most recent results of staff PCR testing and [student pooled testing](#). Dr. Austin reminded attendees of the importance of continuing to adhere to mitigation protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our schools and our community to allow for a successful return to full in-person learning.
- Dr. Austin gave an update on the in-person learning plan for secondary students. As noted in his proposal last week, beginning on March 29, Hingham Middle School (HMS) students will attend for five partial days per week. Beginning on April 5, Hingham High School (HHS) students will attend for five partial days per week. All students, with the exception of those who choose to attend remotely, will return full time in-person, on Monday, April 26. Families have received a survey and are required to commit to either in-person or remote learning by April 17. HHS and HMS Principals hosted Zoom forums on Monday to address building-specific questions.

Communications:

- Yesterday, the Education Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee voted to recommend the proposed School Department budget request to the full Advisory Committee. The Committee thanks the Subcommittee for their support and engagement in a thoughtful budget process.
- The next steps toward a final education budget are as follows:
 - Tonight (March 23) the Board of Selectmen will vote on the total town budget recommendation, which will include the amount allocated to the School Department (subject to town meeting approval)
 - On Thursday, March 25, the Advisory Committee will vote on the total town budget recommendation.
 - On Saturday, May 8, all town budgets, including the School Department budget, will be voted on at Town Meeting. Town Meeting will be held at Hingham High School (rain dates are May 15 and 16).
 - Once voters at Town Meeting make a final decision on the School Department budget amount, the School Committee and Administration will work together to determine how those funds will be allocated.

Athletic Department Report:

- Athletic Director Jim Quatramoni and HPS teacher Dr. Phil Struzziero presented [preliminary findings](#) from coach, parent, and student athlete focus groups. These groups are designed to elicit a clear picture of the student athlete experience at HHS and to continuously improve the program.
- All current student athletes, parents, and coaches were invited to participate in the focus groups. All who expressed interest were invited, or will be invited to participate in these sessions, which will continue through the spring.
- The Athletic Department is using data-driven methodology to determine the strengths of the program, as well as areas for improvement.
- Next steps include, for example, additional focus groups, potentially regular coffees with the Athletic Director, the development of clear, and consistent communication strategies across the department.

- The School Committee will receive a final presentation and written report in June of 2021.

Thank you for your continued support and engagement.

If you have questions or concerns, please email your [School Committee members](#).

Upcoming Meeting Details

Joint Meeting of the Board of Selectmen and School Committee (Among its other responsibilities, the Board of Selectmen reviews and sets fiscal guidelines for the annual operating budget and the 5-year capital improvement program and makes recommendations to Town Meeting.)

TONIGHT - Tuesday, March 23 @ 7:00 PM

Meeting ID: 451-213-735

Passcode: 111222

Website: <https://zoom.us/join>

Item of interest is **FY22 Budget Discussion and Vote** and Inside Town Finances Volume 11. You can view the full agenda [here](#).

Advisory Committee Meeting (The Advisory Committee functions as the finance committee for the Town. Its reports and recommendations are included in the Town Meeting Warrant.)

TONIGHT - Tuesday, March 23 @ 7:00 PM

Meeting ID: 833 3507 8021

Passcode: 615 953

Website: <https://zoom.us/join>

Items of interest include further discussion of Forecast, Financial Policy, Fund Balance, overrides and debt exclusions. You can view the full agenda [here](#).

Joint Meeting of the Advisory Committee and the School Committee

Thursday, March 25 @ 7:00 PM

Item of interest is **FY22 Budget Discussion and Vote**.

Agenda and Zoom information will be posted [here](#) by Tuesday, March 23rd.

Office Hours with the School Committee

Tuesday, March 30 @ 7:00 PM

Meeting ID: 815 0036 8478

Passcode: HPS

Website: <https://zoom.us/join>

School Committee Meeting

Monday, April 5 @7:00pm

Agenda and Zoom information will be posted [here](#) by Thursday, April 1st