

Board of Education, Concord School District
Regular monthly meeting
October 3, 2016

Board members: Rusty Cofrin, Clint Cogswell, Tom Croteau, Nathan Fennessy, Barb Higgins, Alana Kimball, Maureen Redmond-Scura, Jim Richards

Absent: Jennifer Patterson

Administrators: Superintendent Terri Forsten, Business Administrator Jack Dunn, Director of Human Resources Larry Prince, Director of Facilities Matt Cashman

Agenda Item 1. Call to Order

Board President Clint Cogswell called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

Agenda Item 2. Approval of Agenda

The Board voted 8-0 to approve the agenda (motioned by Maureen Redmond-Scura, seconded by Barb Higgins).

Agenda Item 3. Public Comment– agenda items only

Concord resident Betty Hoadley spoke about issues that were discussed at the Joint Instructional and Finance Committee on September 12. She noted that the Board will need to make serious decisions about early childhood education in Concord and also to develop a district budget already overwrought with demands. She noted that she has heard several options will be considered by the Board. Mrs. Hoadley commented that too many Board members have not visited the present preschool programs nor the extended day programs in the community. She noted that the report of the Steering Committee is like an executive summary – useful but incomplete – and suggested that Board members investigate an excellent source document by Jim Hull of the Center for Public Policy, which is sponsored by the National School Boards Association. She noted that, while the local report is accurate, the Hull report is nuanced and lays out extensive research about different early childhood education models.

Mrs. Hoadley noted that Board members have two constituent groups: the children of Concord, and the citizens of Concord. She commented that district employees are also an essential part of the overall picture, as they are the ones who give the children their education. She noted that, if a kindergarten teacher has 25 students in class, this presents a significant burden; if a classroom aide is assigned to a single child, the aide cannot assist in the classroom; if one student has significant needs (such as not being

able to tie their own shoes, this too is a significant burden. She noted that it is possible the District will do a bit more for kindergarten teachers. She discussed in some detail the need to involve parents of preschool and kindergarten students in activities that stress social development, including simple games and simple songs.

She asked Board members if they were familiar with the Family Centers. She asked when the administration would lay out the options for the kindergarten programming, and commented that she would disagree with any suggestion to take an early, binding vote on this issue. She noted that if the Board will tentatively approve a program or two within the context of the entire budget, that would be fine, and that it would be better to do this now, and not in the heat of budget preparation.

Mrs. Hoadley reminded the Board of its direction to the Superintendent last year about what could be cut in a tiered budget plan, and suggested that that exercise was valuable in coming to a better understanding of what a million dollars really means. She stated that there is no “million dollars” hiding in the budget. She reiterated that the Board’s constituents are children, and taxpayers – but that parents who want early childhood programs, or businesses, are “not in the equation.” She suggested the Board should listen to early childhood and preschool programs in Concord (such as the before-school program that partners with the YMCA), as a number of public/private partnerships are currently working well. She noted that, with the rush to a full-day kindergarten program, she fears for the Concord taxpayers. Mrs. Hoadley noted that the Concord School Board has managed through many tense times, including horrendous financial times in the early 1990s; the loss of Bow students and gain of Deerfield students; the reinvigoration of the CRTC; adjusting to many years of declining enrollments; and the consolidation of 8 elementary schools to 5, with the construction of 3 new elementary schools. Mrs. Hoadley noted that Clint Cogswell and Jennifer Patterson are the only Board members with any connection to these times/projects. She urged the Board to study more than ever, discuss all points on the compass and reason like they haven’t reasoned before. She said an abrupt, wide and untested change would be ill-advised, and that making incremental changes would result in better outcomes. She closed by stating that the Board must fulfill its philosophical and fiscal responsibilities.

Agenda Item 4. Presentation on STEM topics by Christa McAuliffe School students

Technology Integrator Heather Drolet introduced 7 students (with iPads) who described what STEM is (“solving problems with math”): Oscar Lax, Ava Philbrook, Maria Ruthu, Nick Reynolds, Soren Puc, Grace Murray and Bella Schirling. They described how STEM encourages collaboration; how women and minorities are underrepresented in STEM; how over a million new STEM jobs will be created by 2020; how the US ranks 12th in the world in STEM majors; how art and business majors are increasing in number but STEM majors are decreasing in number. These students led Board members through a “STEM” lesson, including criteria and constraints; design features; modeling; evaluation; and explanation. Board members commented on their

design processes and discussed the students' classroom experience with this and other STEM projects. Students answered a question from Mr. Dunn about how the iPads are used for research. Several students described what surprised them the most in doing these kinds of projects, including how different the designs are; how one's own ideas are not necessarily the best; how the modeling can match the ideas in one's head; how the criteria can be more or less than you thought.

Agenda Item 5. Recognitions

Superintendent Forsten referred Board members to several recognitions in their monthly Board book, among them: BGS was named state winner in the Scholastic Reading challenge over the summer, and ADS students met an Olympic rower on a trip to the State House in September.

Superintendent Forsten introduced new student representative Esther Elonga, who was born in Congo, spent many years in Uganda, and has aspirations to become an anesthesiologist. Rebecca Proulx reported on the Club Fair last week and Homecoming on October 23 that included a light show from the new Stage Craft program at CRTC. She noted that student Maddy Simpson sang the national anthem. Each CHS club created a float, and this year Film Society club won. The football game was great fun, and over 950 tickets to the dance were sold. She noted that the Operation Hat Trick ceremony will take place this weekend.

Esther noted that the NHIAA Walter A. Smith Award was awarded to Gopal Timsina, whose older brother was diagnosed with cancer and died shortly after arriving in the United States after living many years in a refugee camp in Nepal. Anna-Marie DiPasquale was recognized by the government of Estonia for her efforts in creating and building programs for ELL students, and was invited to model these programming ideas to Estonia. Esther told the Board that the annual Hypnosis Show will be on October 26; the Blood Drive will be held on October 18; and the Senior One Acts will be performed on October 28.

Agenda Item 6. Approval of Board Minutes

Mr. Cogswell reviewed the minutes of the regular monthly meeting on August 1.

The Board voted 8-0 to approve the minutes of the regular monthly meeting on September 6, the Work Session on September 14, and the Special Board meeting on September 19 with changes (moved by Nathan Fennessy, seconded by Jim Richards).

Agenda Item 7. Personnel

Mr. Prince presented several coach nominations.

Tonya Pursell, Rundlett Middle School, \$2,038, Girls Field Hockey B Coach, Step 1, Group 11, 5.0%. Tonya replaces Heidi Crumrine

Amy Sherr, Rundlett Middle School, \$978, Cross Country Supplemental Coach, 80% of Step 3, Group 14, 3.0%. Funds from one vacant RMS Girls B Soccer Coach position

Samuel Evans-Brown, Concord High School, \$3,465, Cross Country Ski Head Coach, Step 2, Group 6, 8.5%. Sam replaces Philip Clarner

The Board voted 8-0 to approve the coach nominations as presented (moved by Ms. Higgins, seconded by Rusty Cofrin).

Agenda Item 8. Joint Instructional and Finance Committee

Finance Committee chairperson Tom Croteau presented the report of the meeting on September 12, and encouraged members of the public to view this meeting on ConcordTV as well as to read its minutes, as there was a substantial amount of information presented. The joint committee reviewed the need for developmentally appropriate early childhood programming in Concord; the work that is already going on in Concord; and costs. The start-up cost of full-time kindergarten will be approximately \$1.2 million the first year and approximately \$1 million per year going forward. The current programs would need to be revised. An estimated \$720,000 for classroom teachers, \$184,000 for assistants, and \$317,600 for furniture and equipment are among these start-up costs. Many questions were posed by Board members, regarding the number of specialists that would be needed; Title I money; relocation of preschool programs; programming that would not distract from current preschool programs; the excellent programs that currently exist in the community. Ms. Redmond-Scura noted that the steering committee looked at the entire range of early childhood education. Several options and associated costs will be presented at the next joint committee meeting on October 5, and more meetings will be planned if needed. Mr. Fennessy suggested that the various proposals be publicized; Superintendent Forsten noted that the just-completed draft will be shared within the administration, with the Board, and then with the general public.

Agenda Item 9. Negotiations Committee

Committee chairperson Jim Richards noted that the Negotiations Committee continues to seek progress on the CAA contract.

Agenda Item 10. Other Business

Update on Chromebooks at CHS

CHS Principal Tom Sica noted that September 8 was the official kick-off for the Chromebooks. The required paperwork was distributed, and a short and humorous

video about taking care of one's Chromebook was created by students at HelpDesk. He noted that the HelpDesk course is lively and challenging, noting that students are creating video tutorials for teachers and students and a reference blog for users. He noted that Justin Bourque, CHS Technology Integrator, was vetting the students' work, which includes developing skills in writing, public speaking, and technology. A number of teachers have begun the work of integrating google classrooms in their own classroom work. Helen Dugan and John Willis were among the many staff members assisting in the roll-out.

Ms. Higgins noted that her daughter has been able to follow her classroom work at times when she is not able to attend school, and has found this to be very helpful.

Using Google docs – tutorial

Superintendent Forsten noted that the working policy file is posted in the Board folder for the committee's use as it reviews School Board policies. She went over the "suggestions" and "comments" function. "Live" links to New Hampshire statutes and the New Hampshire Department of Education rules are incorporated into this document.

Conversion project update

Mr. Cashman updated the Board on the steam to natural gas conversion project. A landscape survey will be performed on October 6, and a site visit to CHS and other schools on Friday when there is no school. Geotech borings will begin next week, as Liberty Utilities prepares to run the gas line to CHS in November.

Agenda Item 11. Proposed calendar of meetings

Superintendent Forsten discussed the proposed Board committee meetings for October and November.

Alana Kimball asked if the concern about near-capacity fourth grade classes at Beaver Meadow had been resolved. Superintendent Forsten responded that a position, as a Title I tutor, for supporting these classrooms through the Title I grant has been approved by the New Hampshire Department of Education. Mr. Fennessy asked if the staff person to be hired will be providing support to each of those classes. Superintendent Forsten noted that this is the case.

Agenda Item 12. Public comment

There was no public comment.

Agenda Item 13. Adjournment

The Board voted 8-0 to adjourn (motioned by Ms. Higgins, seconded by Mr. Cofrin).

The Board adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Croteau, *Secretary*