

Concord School District
Board of Education
Board Budget Work Session: Enrollments and Staffing
March 15, 2017

Board members present: Nathan Fennessy, Jennifer Patterson, Clint Cogswell, Tom Croteau, Maureen Redmond-Scura, Pam Wicks, Alana Kimball

Members absent: Barb Higgins, Jim Richards

Administrators: *Superintendent Terri Forsten, Assistant Superintendent Donna Palley, Business Administrator Jack Dunn, Director of Human Resources Larry Prince, Director of Facilities and Planning Matt Cashman.*

Building Administrators and presenters: *CHS Principal Tom Sica, CRTC Director and Assistant Principal Steve Rothenberg*

Mr. Cogswell opened the meeting at 5:35 p.m. and explained that the agenda was on RMS, CHS, and CRTC enrollments.

Superintendent Forsten noted that enrollment at each of the three levels (elementary, middle and high school) is projected to stay fairly steady over the next four years. Overall enrollment at the elementary school level is 53 students fewer; at Rundlett Middle School (RMS) 7 students fewer; and at Concord High School (CHS) 13 students fewer in the next year. Students attending CHS from Deerfield could show a small increase, but will be steady overall.

Business Administrator Jack Dunn explained that the decrease in the number of enrolled students will have an impact on adequacy revenue from the state. For the upcoming FY18 and FY19 school years, the per pupil base amount is \$3,636 per student. If the number of students declines by 73, the District could expect a reduction in adequacy of \$265,000 alone. This does not include an additional loss in revenue due to free and reduced-price lunch, special education, ELL, and 3rd grade level reading. This reduction in revenue will impact future budgets, since adequacy is always in arrears.

Superintendent Forsten spoke to projected staffing changes, and discussed the policy regarding class sizes and options for developing kindergarten programs. Staffing changes were outlined. There will be a variety of teaching positions reduced at CHS, a portion of the World Language program at RMS, 2.5 teacher positions at Mill Brook School (MBS), the addition of a .5 teacher position at Abbot-Downing School (ADS) and a 1.0 ELL teacher position at MBS. The enrollment grid was presented, which showed an average of 19 - 22 students per class. The grid shows increases and decreases throughout the District. A few classes that are high at Beaver Meadow School (BMS), ADS and Christa McAuliffe School (CMS) will continue to be monitored.

Nathan Fennessy shared his concern that two CMS kindergarten classes are in excess of class size policy guidelines. CMS also has a second-grade class that is over the class size guidelines; it was noted that this year's second grade is a large class. Superintendent Forsten reminded the Board that the Principals will communicate with her if classes are getting too large. The administration has worked with a couple of families to send their students to smaller classes at other elementary schools.

The World Language program offered in grade 7 is an opportunity for students to gain exposure to each of the four languages offered (French, Spanish, German and Latin), then decide what they would like to study the following year. Jennifer Patterson requested more discussion at the Work Session on March 27 to explore this further.

CHS Principal Tom Sica and CHS Assistant Principal/CRTC Director Steve Rothenberg offered information regarding enrollment at CHS and (Capital Region Technical Center (CRTC) for next fall. Mr. Sica mentioned that CHS guidance counselors are engaging students now to look at their "big four-year plan." Course registration outreach starts with grade 8 for RMS and Deerfield students. After midterms, students began signing up for fall 2017 classes. Trends that include offering a semester-long versus an all-year offering would show enrollments are down in art, by 0.4 with a class size just under 25 students. In Business, there is no change to staff, and an average class size of 27. Digital Education is down by .10 FTE one semester. English has an average class size of 25 students, without a reduction in the English department. Math has a reduction of 0.4 FTE; a staff member in that department is retiring, and the administration is considering absorbing that loss. Enrollments in Music classes continue to grow, with no changes being considered. The administration is considering combining the work of several English courses, so courses like *British Literature* and *Shakespeare Studies* may be combined. Mr. Sica explained that English and Social Studies classes average 24 students, but Biology classes would have 23.2 students per class, offering consistency for the freshman class sizes. Mr. Rothenberg mentioned that Tech Education, Drafting I, and Engineering class sizes range from 26, 27 and 18, respectively. Mr. Sica mentioned that Algebra has 25.8 students per class, with 10 sections for next year. Chemistry will have 17 sections with class sizes of just under 23; class size in these programs is normally 24. Social Studies has a 40% reduction and World Language has a 20% reduction; specifically, French and Latin are slowly reducing, so the administration is considering combining classes (for example, Latin 4 and 5 could be combined). There has been some interest expressed in offering a Mandarin Chinese course; the Instructional Committee may consider this for fall 2018. Maureen Redmond-Scura asked about VLACS classes, and Mr. Sica explained that the administration is exploring languages that are not offered at CHS.

Mr. Rothenberg noted that Auto Tech I and II have seen a significant increase in interest, including return interest from current students. Culinary Arts is a current concern, with decreasing enrollments this year – the concern is not just in Concord, but statewide. Mr. Rothenberg mentioned that 18 is the targeted number of students per class for this course. He noted that Computer Engineering is moving away from fixing computers

and moving toward programming computers. Fire Science declined in enrollments; the administration is considering taking a year off for this program; Fire Science is taught by actual Fire Department employees and EMT personnel. Health Science is very strong: "We have two teachers now and we are going forward with this number for next year." Many of these students wish to go into the fields of nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy and even veterinarian science. Teacher Prep enrollment numbers declined, as did Theater Prep, so the administration is examining ways to tweak and improve these programs.

Superintendent Forsten presented a question-and-answer document on full-day kindergarten (FDK), developed in collaboration with Ms. Patterson, Mr. Dunn and Donna Palley, that included greater detail on eight questions. The intent is that the document will be posted so the public can use it as a reference to understand the issues and topics related to FDK and the associated decision process by the Board. Discussion followed about detailing some of the figures on the question-and-answer document. Ms. Patterson requested that Mr. Dunn should review these numbers and bring clarity to the form. The request was made that the document be submitted to the *Monitor* for publication by Thursday, March 16, 2017.

Board members discussed the Governor's targeted kindergarten funding proposal. Ms. Patterson noted that she had examined HB 2 and felt that funding would not be available to support the budget next year even if the bill were to pass. Next year's adequacy funding is based on this year's enrollment and, because of this, the District would not receive funding next year if the Board were to implement FDK. Mr. Cogswell noted that the Commissioner for Education, Frank Edelblut, mentioned that the Governor's targeted funding would average out to about \$100 per child. Superintendent Forsten told the Board that she is planning to offer Mr. Edelblut the opportunity to visit Concord schools.

Mr. Dunn presented a FY 17 budget update, noting that with the conversion from steam to natural gas there may be \$82,000 in savings; however, the District will have spent over \$1 million on steam heat this season alone. In addition, there is likely to be a deficit in the snow plowing accounts of -\$15,000, and special education out-of-District (OOD) placements are showing a deficit of -\$537,000. The administration projected -\$480,000 when it prepared the budget. Mr. Dunn noted that he is working on a projection for Food Service as well. The unreserved fund balanced balance is currently at \$1.074 million. The FY18 Budget was developed having at least \$1.325 million in savings from FY17. If the \$1.325 million is not achieved, the Board would have to consider additional cuts or increase the amount of revenue raised in local taxes. Mr. Dunn also informed the Board that, because the Board acted quickly on the bond, it avoided the impact of the recent Federal Reserve interest rate increase. The impact would have resulted in additional interest of \$267,000 over the 20-year bond, or the need for an additional \$27,000 in next year's budget.

Mr. Dunn informed Board members that he placed a draft document in the budget folder that explains each of the important numbers on their electronic "dashboard." The

explanation of fields includes total appropriations, revenue, unreserved fund balance, local tax rate, state tax rate, total local and state tax, valuations, and more.

The Board voted 8-0 to adjourn (motioned by Ms. Redmond-Scura, seconded by Mr. Fennessy).

The meeting adjourned at 7:37 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Croteau, *Secretary*
Matt Cashman, *Recorder*