

Concord School District
Annual School Board Retreat
January 20, 2018

School Board members present: Jennifer Patterson, Tom Croteau, Maureen Redmond-Scura, Clint Cogswell, Nathan Fennessy, Jim Richards, Pam Wicks, Chuck Crush, Liza Poinier

District Administrators present: Terri Forsten, *Superintendent*, Donna Palley, *Assistant Superintendent*, Jack Dunn, *Business Administrator*, Larry Prince, *Director of Human Resources*

Agenda – meeting notes

The morning began with a quick review of the District vision and mission. This was followed by an ice breaker activity as there were new Board members; the intent was to get to know each other through personal biographies.

A. Developing Boardsmanship – Evaluating the School Board

Each retreat participant filled out an evaluation tool – a modified tool from NHSBA. Following a conversation, all agreed that the Board’s focus for development in the coming year would be the following areas:

Community Relationships

The Board would like to develop ways to improve community communications. Later during the retreat, the Board decided to change the name and expand the focus of one Board committee. The Joint City Council/School Board Committee will have a different name to reflect the intent to expand the Board’s relations with the community as well as its work with the City Council.

Staff and Personnel Relationships

Board members talked about how to connect with staff, and how to develop more positive working relationships between the Board and teachers – not that it is negative, but the Board would like it to be more intentional. The Board was interested in assuring teachers and all staff of their support, pride and appreciation for the work they support in the schools. The Board also talked about how to engage teachers with policy development.

B. Roberts Rules of Order – Review, Cheat Sheet, intention for meetings

It was agreed to distribute the “Roberts Rules of Order Cheat Sheet” that was found online, to guide meeting facilitation and practices. There was an understanding of the importance and relevance to using this process in Board meetings.

C. Review of Committees – Goals for Committees, Changes for 2018–2019

Board members discussed the work of each committee, highlighted success from the

past year and discussed focus areas for the coming year. These ideas will be discussed further at each of the next committee meetings, and goals will be created at the committee level and recommended to the Board at a follow-up meeting.

Instructional Committee – For the coming year, the Board would like to receive updates from some of the presentations and new initiatives that occurred this past year – the RMS report card, integration of technology, new courses at CHS. The Board would also like to have information about the elementary Mathematics and Writing programs. The Board would like a presentation on scheduling at the elementary level and any scheduling options being considered at other levels. The Board would also like to have a conversation and gain understanding of the District’s relationships with parents, family involvement programs and special education.

Joint City Council / School Board Committee – Board members and administrators discussed changing the name of this committee, and several names were considered: City and Community Communications, City and Community Relations, Community and Government Relations, City and Government Communications. The intent would be to broaden this committee’s work beyond the meetings with City administrators and Council members; to develop ways to highlight the impressive work and achievement in Concord schools; to seek and gain public input in a purposeful way.

Negotiations Committee – This committee is having a busy year with regular meetings as the District is in the midst of several negotiations with bargaining groups. Its work is strong, focused on fair negotiations and maintaining strong contracts for these groups.

Capital Facilities Committee – This committee has had a busy year as it has overseen the steam-to-gas conversion project and the Rundlett Middle School facility study. Several projects with significant costs will need to be considered for the coming year: roof projects at CHS and BGS; the infrastructure grant to support access and security at CHS; the enrollment–demographic study; the future of the Stable building; and the continuing development of the middle school facility.

Communications & Policy Committee – This committee’s description will be revised to include the review, revision and development of policies. The Board will also develop clarification of this committee’s process to “hear and decide on appeals” and to “hear concerns.” This committee has continued to successfully focus on reviewing and updating Board policies.

Executive Committee – This committee’s focus was not reviewed at the retreat. This committee may have that conversation at its next meeting and bring recommendations for changes back to the Board.

Finance Committee – This committee is critically important for fiscal responsibility as it considers projects and program development in the annual budget development; regular budget review; contract negotiations’ impact; and bond management. Most recently, the bond for the steam-to-gas conversion, developing the Stable, technology and bus purchases have been part of this committee’s work. The Finance Committee will continue to consider the development of the middle school facility, its associated

costs and the timing of a new bond.

The Board and administrators also discussed the importance of the Finance Committee considering the liabilities associated with Other Postemployment Benefits (or OPEB) (other than pensions). This is the term used to refer to benefits that are provided to retired employees. These benefits principally involve healthcare benefits, but also may include life insurance, disability, legal, separation and other services. The Board and administrators began a conversation about the possibility of developing a Trust to set aside funds to support or to lessen liability, which is currently estimated to be over \$19 million. This will be discussed at a future Finance Committee meeting.

D. Full Day Kindergarten – decision making, Budget FY2019 process and timeline

This topic was added to the agenda by a Board member who questioned whether it would be appropriate for the Board to take a vote to confirm full-day kindergarten for next year. The conversation was important, as some Board members have heard from parents whose children will be in kindergarten in the fall and they would like to know whether there will be full-day public school programming or if they should enroll their children in a private full-day kindergarten program. Board members and administrators discussed that the budget process had been changed to enable an earlier Board vote on the FY19 Budget on March 19. Administrators have called each local private provider to let them know the timeline of that vote. It would be unusual for the Board to decide on any singular component of the FYI 9 Budget before the presentations on each component and prior to the Public Hearings. This topic may be revisited at the next Board meeting on February 5.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Redmond-Scura, *Secretary*

Terri Forsten, *Recorder*