

Board of Education, Concord School District  
**Annual Organization meeting and Regular meeting**  
**January 4, 2021**

**Board members present:** Jim Richards, Barb Higgins, Danielle Smith, Brenda Hastings, Jonathan Weinberg, Kate West; student representatives Jenita Aquino Patzan and Alice Richards. Those participating remotely: Gina Cannon, Pamela Walsh, David Parker

**Administrators:** *Superintendent* Kathleen Murphy, *Donna Palley, Business Administrator* Jack Dunn, *Director of Human Resources* Larry Prince, *Director of Facilities* Matt Cashman

**Annual Organizational Meeting**

Superintendent Kathleen Murphy called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and recognized new Board members Brenda Hastings (Wards 8, 9, 10), Jonathan Weinberg (Wards 5, 6, 7), and Kate West (Wards 2, 2, 3, 4). She pointed out those clauses in the Charter that govern the first meeting of the Board in each calendar year. Superintendent Murphy then opened the floor to nominations for President of the School Board.

Danielle Smith nominated Jim Richards for President for 2021, noting that he did a phenomenal job after the departure of former President Jennifer Patterson, and shows strength, and consistency. Barb Higgins seconded the motion. There were no other nominations.

**The Board voted 9–0 by roll call (Gina Cannon, Brenda Hastings, Barb Higgins, David Parker, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, Pamela Walsh, Jonathan Weinberg, Kate West vote aye) to elect Jim Richards as President of the Concord School Board for 2021 (motioned by Danielle Smith, seconded by Barb Higgins).**

Mr. Richards asked for nominations for Vice President of the Board.

Mr. Richards nominated Barb Higgins as Vice President, noting that she had served with commitment on the Board for a considerable time. Ms. Smith seconded the motion. There were no other nominations.

**The Board voted 9–0 by roll call (Gina Cannon, Brenda Hastings, Barb Higgins, David Parker, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, Pamela Walsh, Jonathan Weinberg, Kate West vote aye) to elect Barb Higgins as Vice President of the Board for 2021 (motioned by Mr. Richards, seconded by Ms. Smith).**

Barb Higgins nominated Gina Cannon as Secretary of the Board. Mr. Parker seconded the motion. There were no other nominations.

**The Board voted 9-0 by roll call (Gina Cannon, Brenda Hastings, Barb Higgins, David Parker, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, Pamela Walsh, Jonathan Weinberg,**

**Kate West vote aye) to elect Gina Cannon as secretary of the Board for 2021 (motioned by Ms. Higgins, seconded by Mr. Parker).**

Mr. Richards made a motion to table the appointment of Deputy Clerk of the Board. Ms. Higgins seconded the motion.

**The Board voted 9–0 by roll call (Gina Cannon, Brenda Hastings, Barb Higgins, David Parker, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, Pamela Walsh, Jonathan Weinberg, Kate West vote aye) to table the motion to appoint a Deputy Clerk of the Board until the next monthly meeting (motioned by Mr. Richards, seconded by Ms. Higgins).**

**The Board voted 9–0 by roll call (Gina Cannon, Brenda Hastings, Barb Higgins, David Parker, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, Pamela Walsh, Jonathan Weinberg, Kate West vote aye) to adjourn the organizational meeting (motioned by Ms. Walsh, seconded by Ms. Smith).**

The organizational meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gina Cannon, *Secretary*  
Linden Jackett, *Recorder*

Concord School District  
Board of Education  
**Regular monthly meeting**  
**January 4, 2021**

**Board members present:** Jim Richards, Barb Higgins, Danielle Smith, Brenda Hastings, Jonathan Weinberg, Kate West; student representatives Jenita Aquino Patzan and Alice Richards. Those participating remotely: Gina Cannon, Pamela Walsh, David Parker

**Administrators:** *Superintendent* Kathleen Murphy, Donna Palley, *Business Administrator* Jack Dunn, *Director of Facilities* Matt Cashman. Participating remotely were *Director of Physical Education and Sport* Steve Mello, *CHS Principal* Mike Reardon, *RMS Principal* Paulette Fitzgerald and *Director of IT* Pam McLeod.

Agenda Item 1. Call to Order

Board President Jim Richards called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. and welcomed new Board members Brenda Hastings, Jonathan Weinberg, and Kate West.

Agenda Item 2. Approval of Agenda

**The Board voted 9-0 by roll call (Gina Cannon, Brenda Hastings, Barb Higgins, David Parker, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, Pamela Walsh, Jonathan Weinberg, Kate West vote aye) to approve the agenda (motioned by Ms. Higgins, seconded by Mr. Weinberg).**

Agenda Item 3. Approval of Board Minutes

Mr. Richards reviewed the minutes of the regular Board meeting on December 7, 2020.

**The Board voted 9-0 by roll call (Gina Cannon, Brenda Hastings, Barb Higgins, David Parker, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, Pamela Walsh, Jonathan Weinberg, Kate West vote aye) to approve the minutes of the regular monthly meeting on December 7, 2020 (moved by Ms. Higgins, seconded by Ms. Smith).**

Agenda Item 4. Recognitions/Reports

ConcordTV Executive Director Josh Hardy provided the annual report of ConcordTV to the Board. He noted that ConcordTV was a “PEG” (public, education, government) station. He described its funding stream, noting that it was a non-profit, building on its relationship with the City of Concord and the Concord School District. He said the station had three streaming channels including YouTube, and a Facebook page. Several Board

members commented on the value added to the school community by ConcordTV staff. Mr. Richards thanked Mr. Hardy for his particular assistance with School Board recordings, especially with the switch to remote meetings due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Student Board representatives Jenita Aquino Patzan and Alice Richards provided notes on events at CHS. CHS did not hold a typical winter assembly or spirit week, but still held the annual food and fun drive, this year with an emphasis solely on funds. Closing at the end of last month, \$8,250 had been raised on the GoFundMe site with an additional \$1,000 donated, totaling \$9,250. CHS would not have a traditional midterm week; some teachers would have their students work on competency recovery, while other teachers might distribute midterms and make adjustments of assessments. Last month, they met with Assistant Superintendent Donna Palley and Safety/Title IX Officer, Karen Fischer-Anderson to discuss ways they could be helpful and involved as student representatives, specifically in terms of policy work. We discussed policies around transgender students and those dealing with teen pregnancy. They said it was important to hear from those who would be directly impacted by particular policies. They decided they would shift focus to bullying and potentially hazing policies, as the impact everyone in the District regardless of age; their goal was to gather input from a wide range of stakeholders. They plan to meet again with Ms. Palley and Ms. Fischer-Anderson. Mr. Weinberg asked the students about the grading policy this spring, and Alice described this.

Superintendent Murphy announced that all school nurses had had the first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine, or were scheduled for this week. All students were in remote until January 19, with the exception of some groups receiving services in the schools, including special education, homeless, and ELL. She spoke about winter sports and the “pause” in training prior to the holiday recess. Mr. Richards asked for an update on the athletics plan at the next Instructional Committee meeting.

Ms. Walsh asked the Superintendent whether there were updates on the proposed “look” at remote in the upper grade levels. Mr. Reardon noted that students would be present for all cohorts except for Wednesdays. He spoke specific proposals for the second semester. Ms. Walsh requested information that could be shared before the Instructional Committee meeting.

Superintendent Murphy spoke about the Anti-racism/Anti-Discrimination Advisory Group, noting training that would be presented at the Board retreat on January 16. An all-day workshop on social/emotional learning “with an equity lens” was scheduled on January 25. Mr. Weinberg asked about specific exercises used in the trainings. Superintendent Murphy noted there would be a presentation, “homework,” small group breakouts, and shared reflections. Mr. Richards asked whether there was training offered for the middle school, as he understood that misunderstandings and biases happened earlier than high school. Superintendent Murphy said elementary/middle school Principals were involved in the Advisory Group, including CMS Principal Gallo, and RMS Principal Fitzgerald.

Meals were being delivered into the community, including well over 1,000 breakfasts and lunches being delivered on weekdays. The question whether meals were delivered on weekends depended on federal grants.

Agenda Item 5. Public Comment– agenda items only

There was no public comment.

Agenda Item 6. Personnel

Superintendent Murphy noted that contracts for Business Administrator Jack Dunn and Director of Facilities and Planning Matt Cashman.

**The Board voted 9-0 by roll call (Gina Cannon, Brenda Hastings, Barb Higgins, David Parker, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, Pamela Walsh, Jonathan Weinberg, Kate West vote aye) to approve the employment contract for Jack Dunn as presented (motioned by Mr. Richards, seconded by Ms. Higgins).**

**The Board voted 9-0 by roll call (Gina Cannon, Brenda Hastings, Barb Higgins, David Parker, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, Pamela Walsh, Jonathan Weinberg, Kate West vote aye) to approve the employment contract for Matt Cashman as presented (motioned by Mr. Richards, seconded by Ms. Hastings).**

Mr. Prince presented two new teacher nominations.

Shannon Caron, School Counselor, Concord High School, \$42,267, 95 days at M+30-12, one year only. *Certification:* Experienced Educator Certificate, exp. 06/30/2022, Principal; School Counselor. Shannon replaces Jodie McLaughlin (95 days at M-10 = \$37,737) – LOA. Budgeted at \$37,737 for 95 days

Molly Henry, Kindergarten Teacher, Beaver Meadow School, \$24,876, 92 days at M-1, one year only. *Certification:* Beginning Educator Certificate, exp. 06/30/2022; Elementary Education (K-6). Molly replaces Elizabeth Williams (92 days at B-3 = \$25,193) – LOA. Budgeted at \$25,193 for 92 days

**The Board voted 9-0 by roll call (Gina Cannon, Brenda Hastings, Barb Higgins, David Parker, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, Pamela Walsh, Jonathan Weinberg, Kate West vote aye) to approve the new teacher nominations as presented (motioned by Ms. Higgins, seconded by Ms. Smith).**

Larry Prince presented one coach nomination.

Debra Morrill, Girls Basketball B Coach, Rundlett Middle School, \$2,249.00, Step 1, Group 11, 5.0%. Debra replaces Cassidy Emerson

**The Board voted by roll call 9–0 (Gina Cannon, Brenda Hastings, Barb Higgins, David Parker, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, Pamela Walsh, Jonathan Weinberg,**

**Kate West vote aye) to approve the coach nomination as presented (moved by Ms. Smith, seconded by Mr. Weinberg).**

#### Agenda Item 7. Negotiations

Mr. Prince reported on the Negotiations Committee meeting of December 9, and was pleased to announce an agreement with the 10-member Maintenance and Transportation bargaining group. He noted that negotiations occurred over three or four sessions; the group represented themselves. He reviewed the highlights of the agreement, which represented \$69,987 in “new money.”

**The Board voted by roll call 9–0 (Gina Cannon, Brenda Hastings, Barb Higgins, David Parker, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, Pamela Walsh, Jonathan Weinberg, Kate West vote aye) to approve the Maintenance and Transportation collective bargaining agreement as presented (moved by Mr. Richards, seconded by Ms. Cannon).**

Mr. Dunn summarized the memorandum of agreement with the educational assistant bargaining group.

**The Board voted by roll call 9–0 (Gina Cannon, Brenda Hastings, Barb Higgins, David Parker, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, Pamela Walsh, Jonathan Weinberg, Kate West vote aye) to approve the CEAA memorandum of agreement as presented (moved by Mr. Richards, seconded by Ms. Smith).**

Mr. Dunn summarized the memorandum of agreement with the UAW Transportation bargaining group, noting that it had been approved in October but revisions had been made since then.

**The Board voted by roll call 9–0 (Gina Cannon, Brenda Hastings, Barb Higgins, David Parker, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, Pamela Walsh, Jonathan Weinberg, Kate West vote aye) to approve the UAW Transportation memorandum of agreement as presented (moved by Ms. Smith, seconded by Ms. Hastings).**

#### Agenda Item 8. Joint Finance/Instructional

Barb Higgins reported on the December 16 joint Finance/Instructional Committee meeting, which focused on the scope and cost of athletic and co-curricular programs, the operation of winter athletics this year, and the presentation of the annual enrollment report. The frequently revised “guidance matrix” was also discussed at that meeting. Mr. Parker noted that taxpayers are concerned to see taxes continue to go up to 3% per year, when enrollment continued to decrease. Over 10 years one would expect to see a decrease in the tax rate, but instead sees additional expenses. He suggested the Board needed to do a good job over the next few years to very clearly describe all the reasons the budget continually went up.

## Agenda Item 9. Communications and Policy Committee

Pamela Walsh noted that the Committee had met on December 21 to discuss several policies, including Policy #532 Suicide Prevention and Response, Policy #462 Background Investigation and Criminal Records Checks, and Policy #402 Training and Information Relative to Child Sexual Abuse Prevention.

Mr. Richards made a motion, seconded by Barb Higgins, to waive the first reading of Policy #532 Suicide Prevention and Response and to approve the policy.

Mr. Weinberg noted that building liaisons would be given additional training and asked whether they would be paid supplemental income for these duties. Ms. Palley noted that staff were paid a stipend if they became trainers of the material on a professional development day. He asked whether there was an additional team layer under the building liaison to manage suicide prevention and response. Mr. Richards suggested this level of detail would be included in the plan, expected at the end of March. Ms. Hastings asked whether teachers would be told about the policy. Superintendent Murphy noted that, after approval, the policy would be presented to the Principals, who would then present to their staff at faculty meetings.

Ms. West said she had heard about the *Lightspeed* app and wondered whether the District was utilizing this technology to check in with students. Superintendent Murphy indicated that *Lightspeed* was being piloted and protocols were being developed to manage the data and response. CPD had been a great resource, and would do wellness checks if requested.

Mr. Richards asked whether custodial, bus, coaching, and food service staff received any training, and Superintendent Murphy said all District employees received the same training, and staff did know what to do and who to go to with concerns.

Ms. Cannon said she had privacy and notification concerns about *Lightspeed*. She asked when it had been greenlighted; what had been put in place to protect student privacy; whether parents were aware it had begun; whether students were aware when they were using District computers that certain queries were being monitored and reported. Superintendent Murphy reiterated that Policy #542 Acceptable Internet Use – Students covered these areas in detail. Protocols for using *Lightspeed* were still in development. Ms. Cannon thought the average fourth or fifth grader would not have read or understood the computer usage policy, and asked whether it had been explained in simple language so users would understand what was being monitored and how that information was being used. Superintendent Murphy said she would need to consult with the Digital Learning Specialists at each school to make sure students understood that data might be gathered on certain keywords and sites they might visit using District equipment or District connections. Mr. Weinberg said he had heard from some parents that mental health concerns had been exacerbated in the pandemic. He asked about how students would be assisted if they were searching for suicide prevention materials or were trying to find educational materials, potentially for a research paper. Superintendent Murphy noted that

all such usage would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Mr. Parker recounted that he had one such experience with staff at CHS, which was appropriately flagged and handled with discretion and professionally. In response to a question from Ms. West about steps arising from a flag by *Lightspeed*, Superintendent Murphy noted that while every case was different, the administrative team might call parent(s), or CPD. Response protocols were still in development, and Director of IT Pam McLeod was overseeing this project.

In response to a question from Mr. Weinberg about checking up on students during remote learning, Superintendent Murphy noted that school nurses, guidance counselors, and social workers were assigned specific students.

Ms. Cannon said the policy was required by state law, written primarily by NHSBA, thoroughly vetted by their attorneys; modified by Karen Fischer-Anderson for the District and reviewed by District counsel. The plan would be reviewed on a biannual basis.

**The Board voted 9-0 by roll call (Gina Cannon, Brenda Hastings, Barb Higgins, David Parker, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, Pamela Walsh, Jonathan Weinberg, Kate West vote aye) to waive the first reading of Policy #532 Suicide Prevention and Response and to approve the policy as presented (motioned by Mr. Richards, seconded by Ms. Higgins).**

Agenda Item 10. Proposed motion: Board position on racism, anti-Semitism, bigotry

Mr. Weinberg presented his motion.

**The Board voted 9-0 by roll call (Gina Cannon, Brenda Hastings, Barb Higgins, David Parker, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, Pamela Walsh, Jonathan Weinberg, Kate West vote aye) to approve the following resolution: "In light of recent events and the rise of anti-Semitism, racism, and bigotry across the state, we, the Concord School Board, reaffirm our commitment to stand up against these injustices and work toward making our District more tolerant, inclusive and safe for each member of our community." (motioned by Mr. Weinberg, seconded by Mr. Richards)**

Agenda Item 11. Other business

Superintendent Murphy noted that the earlier 2021-2022 school year calendar had an error, and the February vacation needed to be moved to February 28 to March 5, 2022.

Ms. Walsh said a number of parents had talked with her about the continuing scheduling of mandatory or near-mandatory meetings (back to school nights, sports meetings, conferences, etc.) on Jewish religious holidays and encouraged the Superintendent to distribute information about major religious events. Ms. Higgins noted sometimes it was difficult to find any date that would work, and it was important to find an alternate way to get information to parents if they could not attend.

**The Board voted 9-0 by roll call (Gina Cannon, Brenda Hastings, Barb Higgins, David Parker, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, Pamela Walsh, Jonathan Weinberg, Kate West vote aye) to revise the 2021-2022 school year calendar as recommended (motioned by Ms. Hastings, seconded by Ms. Smith)**

There was some discussion of the NHSBA annual assembly in January. Ms. Cannon would represent the Board. Superintendent Murphy requested votes on the proposed resolutions so Ms. Cannon would know how to vote, or not to vote. There was some discussion about the proposed resolutions, especially the Manchester School Board motion on differentiated aid, specifically related to Covid-19 issue. Ms. Cannon noted that the Manchester and Nottingham resolutions came in after the deadline; thus NHSBA did not take a position on either.

Ms. Walsh made a motion that the Board support the NHSBA recommendations on proposed resolutions by ConVal (resolutions 1 and 2), by Raymond, by Monadnock (resolutions 1 and 2), by Oyster River School Boards. Ms. Higgins seconded.

**The Board voted by roll call 7-0 with two abstentions (Gina Cannon, Brenda Hastings, Barb Higgins, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, Pamela Walsh, Jonathan Weinberg, Kate West voted aye; Mr. Parker and Ms. Cannon abstained) to Board support the NHSBA recommendations on proposed resolutions by ConVal (resolutions 1 and 2), Raymond, Monadnock (resolutions 1 and 2), and Oyster River School Boards (motioned by Ms. Walsh, seconded by Ms. Higgins).**

Ms. Walsh made a motion that the Board support the NHSBA recommendation on proposed resolution by Manchester. Ms. West seconded. Mr. Richards said he was concerned that numbers generated this year, in the pandemic, were not even close to those represented by the actual facts.

**The Board voted by roll call 9-0 (Gina Cannon, Brenda Hastings, Barb Higgins, David Parker, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, Pamela Walsh, Jonathan Weinberg, Kate West voted aye) to support the proposed resolution by the Manchester School Board (motioned by Ms. Walsh, seconded by Ms. Higgins).**

Mr. Weinberg asked for numbers of students that “tuition in” to the District. Superintendent Murphy noted there were vanishingly few, and all fell under the Manifest Educational Hardship/Best Interests policies; each would come before the Board if tuition payment was involved.

Ms. Cannon made a motion that the Board abstain from taking a position on the resolution by the Nottingham School Board. Mr. Richards seconded the motion. Mr. Parker said this was a conflict of interest for him.

**The Board voted by roll call 8-0 with one abstention (Gina Cannon, Brenda Hastings, Barb Higgins, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, Pamela Walsh, Jonathan Weinberg, Kate West voted aye; Mr. Parker abstained) to abstain from taking a position on the resolution by the Nottingham School Board (motioned by Ms. Walsh, seconded by Ms. Higgins).**

Agenda Item 12. Proposed calendar of meetings

Superintendent Murphy discussed the proposed Board calendars for January and February, highlighting the Board retreat on January 16 at Rundlett Middle School. The final budget would be voted on March 26.

Agenda Item 13. Public comment

There was no public comment.

Agenda Item 14. Non-public session

There was no need for the non-public session.

Agenda Item 15. Adjournment

**The Board voted 9-0 to adjourn (motioned by Ms. Higgins, seconded by Ms. Smith).**

The Board adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barb Higgins, *Secretary*

Note the membership of the 2021 Board committees as follows:

**Capital Facilities:** Brenda Hastings, Danielle Smith, *Chair*, Pamela Walsh, Kate West

**City and Community Relations:** Brenda Hastings, David Parker, *Chair*; Jonathan Weinberg, Kate West

**Communications and Policy:** Gina Cannon, *Chair*; David Parker, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith

**Executive:** Jim Richards, *President*; Barb Higgins, *Vice President*; Gina Cannon, *Secretary*

**Finance:** Barb Higgins, David Parker, Pamela Walsh, *Chair*; Jonathan Weinberg

**Instructional:** Brenda Hastings, Barb Higgins, *Chair*; Pamela Walsh, Kate West

**Negotiations:** Gina Cannon, Jim Richards, *Chair*, Danielle Smith, Jonathan Weinberg

Membership on three ad hoc committees would be determined at the Board Retreat: Anti-racism/Discrimination; Superintendent Search; Special Education