

Board of Education, Concord School District
Annual Organization meeting and Regular meeting
January 6, 2020

Board members present: Gina Cannon; Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Barb Higgins, Jennifer Patterson, Liza Poinier, Danielle Smith, Jim Richards, David Parker, student representatives Gaven Brown and Alice Richards

Administrators: *Interim Superintendent* Frank Bass, Donna Palley, *Business Administrator* Jack Dunn, *Director of Facilities* Matt Cashman

Annual Organizational Meeting

Superintendent Frank Bass called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and recognized new Board members David Parker and Gina Cannon. He pointed out those clauses in the Charter that govern the first meeting of the Board in each calendar year. Superintendent Bass then opened the floor to nominations for President of the School Board.

Tom Croteau nominated Jennifer Patterson for President, noting that she has every qualification necessary to lead. Danielle Smith seconded the motion. Chuck Crush nominated Barb Higgins for President. Gina Cannon seconded the motion. There were no other nominations.

The Board voted 4–3 by roll call (Danielle Smith, Jim Richards, Tom Croteau, Liza Poinier voted yes. David Parker, Chuck Crush, Gina Cannon voted no. Barb Higgins, Jennifer Patterson abstained.) to elect Jennifer Patterson as President of the Concord School Board for 2020 (motioned by Mr. Croteau, seconded by Danielle Smith).

The Board voted 3-4 by roll call (David Parker, Chuck Crush, Gina Cannon voted yes. Jim Richards, Tom Croteau, Danielle Smith, Liza Poinier voted no. Barb Higgins, Jennifer Patterson abstained.) to elect Barb Higgins as President of the Concord School Board for 2020 (motioned by Mr. Crush, seconded by Ms. Cannon).

As the votes were mis-reported originally, the Board voted a second time on the nomination of Jennifer Patterson as President of the Board.

The Board voted 4–2 by roll call (Danielle Smith, Jim Richards, Tom Croteau, Liza Poinier voted yes. Chuck Crush, Gina Cannon voted no. Barb Higgins, Jennifer Patterson, David Parker abstained.) to elect Jennifer Patterson as President of the Concord School Board for 2020 (motioned by Mr. Croteau, seconded by Ms. Smith).

Newly elected Board President Patterson suggested that the Board further discuss the process at the Board's January retreat.

Ms. Patterson asked for nominations for Vice President of the Board.

Mr. Crush nominated Jim Richards as Vice President, noting that he had done an excellent job as a senior member of the Board. Mr. Croteau seconded the motion.

The Board voted 8-0 by roll call (Jim Richards abstained) to elect Jim Richards as Vice President of the Board for 2020 (motioned by Mr. Crush, seconded by Mr. Croteau).

Ms. Patterson nominated Barb Higgins as Secretary of the Board. Mr. Crush seconded the motion. Tom Croteau nominated Liza Poinier as Secretary of the Board. Mr. Richards seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations.

The Board voted 6-1 by roll call (David Parker, Danielle Smith, Barb Higgins, Jennifer Patterson, Chuck Crush, Gina Cannon voted yes. Tom Croteau voted no. Jim Richards and Liza Poinier abstained.) to elect Barb Higgins as secretary of the Board for 2020 (motioned by Ms. Patterson, seconded by Mr. Crush).

Ms. Patterson nominated Patrick Taylor as Deputy Clerk of the Board. Ms. Higgins seconded the motion. There were no other nominations.

The Board voted 9-0 to appoint Patrick Taylor as Deputy Clerk of the Board for 2020, with thanks (motioned by Ms. Patterson, seconded by Ms. Higgins).

The Board voted 9-0 to adjourn the organizational meeting (motioned by Ms. Higgins, seconded by Ms. Cannon).

The organizational meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barb Higgins, *Secretary*

Concord School District
Board of Education
Regular monthly meeting
January 6, 2020

Board members: Jennifer Patterson, *President*; Gina Cannon, Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Barb Higgins, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, David Parker; student representatives Gaven Brown and Alice Richards

Administrators: *Superintendent* Frank Bass, Donna Palley, *Business Administrator* Jack Dunn, *Director of Facilities* Matt Cashman

Agenda Item 1. Call to Order

Board President Jennifer Patterson called the meeting to order at 7:13 p.m. and welcomed new Board members David Parker and Gina Cannon.

Agenda Item 2. Approval of Agenda

The Board voted 9-0 to approve the agenda (motioned by Tom Croteau, seconded by Chuck Crush).

Agenda Item 3. Safety, security and well-being update

Dr. Bass asked CEA President and BGS teacher Michael Macri to present concerns about out-of-control, unsafe behaviors on the part of a number of students, which disrupt the learning environment for other students. Mr. Macri described these conditions in some detail and noted that 15 years ago, the Board decided to adopt a total inclusion model which, teachers feel, works for some students but not for all. He stated that many young teachers are thinking of leaving the profession due to injuries, sometimes in isolated situations. He said he did not mean to imply that every class was out of control, and said the population of concern was only 1%–2% of students across the District. He said over 300 professional staff members had signed the letter of concern. Dr. Bass noted that this area would be analyzed on a holistic basis, and provided several examples.

Dr. Bass noted that one of the issues impacting student safety was communication, including administrator visibility; the ability to respond and follow through in a timely manner; clearer lines of authority and accountability. He stated that CHS interim Principal Michael Reardon planned to recalibrate the CHS administration to have more direct contact with staff and students. He discussed the Director of Guidance and additional Guidance counselor positions that might be proposed in the upcoming budget.

CHS interim Principal Michael Reardon briefly described the lockdown at CHS earlier that day, including the interaction with the student involved. Much of the school was unaware there was a lockdown. Dr. Reardon apologized that there was no announcement made over the public address system. He put out a School Messenger announcement after school, the faculty met to discuss the incident, and the administrative team met for several hours after school to discuss the parameters of the event. He said software in the building doors that would allow the building to be locked down during the day in the case of an external threat was being explored. He suggested installing internal gates in two to three locations in the building (especially for after school evening/weekend events), and hiring someone (perhaps a former police officer) as a para-security person from noon to 6 pm, someone who was good with kids, had a good sense of how the school works and could be a "rover." In the late afternoon, there was inadequate supervision in the building. He also would like to control elevator access after school. Dr. Reardon addressed the CHS master schedule, noting that too many students have unscheduled time, are in study halls or are wandering around. The intent would be to analyze the structure of the school day and institute a new schedule the year after next. He said he was interested in establishing daily advisories (comprised of the same group of students over four years), to help every student have a close connection with an adult and feel more part of the school as a whole.

David Parker said he would need to think about supervisory models. Many people know how to deal with safety protocols. He said it was important to clearly identify the problem. He said that advisories could deteriorate after two years.

Mr. Richards suggested that Dr. Reardon include the necessary officials to make sure that accessibility throughout the building was guaranteed.

Ms. Patterson noted that there were likely budget implications from this discussion, as well as ADA and code issues.

Dr. Bass noted that he was examining the possibility of an SRO position at RMS, \$25,000 of which (out of \$100,000) would be funded by the Concord Police Department. He noted that, while some community members wanted more information about the Memo of Understanding between the District and the CPD, the Police Chief wanted to keep the language the same. Chief Osborn has met with District administrators to talk about what constitutes a call to police (whether a red mark on the skin would indicate bodily assault, for example). Dr. Bass planned to meet with the elementary Principals to discuss some of the issues Mike Macri raised. He said that, while there might at a given time be three students creating disturbances in the classrooms, these might not always be the same students. He said the teams would analyze individual situations and current programs. He acknowledged that more commonality between teacher, student and parent was needed, so that modeled behaviors in school could be replicated in the home.

Mr. Crush commented that it was positive that Ms. Patterson and Dr. Bass had met and discussed Mr. Macri's concerns, which Board members had just received in the form of a letter, and asked about the next steps related to this letter. Dr. Bass noted that he and Mr.

Macri have regular conversations and agreed to weigh the safety and security of individual with class safety and learning environment.

Mr. Croteau said he supported an SRO at RMS and regular meetings with CPD Chief Osgood and the building Principals.

Dr. Bass introduced the draft School Safety Compliance Officer job description, which Donna Palley briefly reviewed. Ms. Patterson said she was interested in whether the position was being brought forward to be filled immediately. Business Administrator Jack Dunn said there might be savings in the copier contract, which was up for renewal. In response to a question from Mr. Crush, Dr. Bass said the person in the proposed position would report to the Superintendent directly. He noted that Title IX/compliance officer positions differed across the State, but that adding a JD requirement would be valuable. Ms. Patterson said she thought this position was important and should be filled immediately.

Ms. Higgins made a motion to move forward with the position at that time. Ms. Patterson seconded the motion.

Mr. Croteau asked about the dollar figure being considered, as savings in the copier contract would be a one-time deal. Mr. Dunn noted that the potential annual salary of \$80,000-90,000, with benefits, would likely total \$130,000. In response to a question from Mr. Parker whether this would be an administrative position, Ms. Patterson suggested it was important that one centralized person heard all the complaints throughout the District, and should be in an office removed from building operations, but able to be accessed by anyone. Mr. Crush asked whether there was a State standard for the Title IX Coordinator position. Dr. Bass said he would check with DOE.

Mr. Parker suggested that many districts were facing Title IX issue and addressing it variably. Mr. Richards suggested the need to review the job description and answer some of the questions that had been raised. Ms. Higgins agreed to amend her motion.

The Board voted 9-0 to create an ad hoc committee comprised of Board members Barb Higgins, Jennifer Patterson and Gina Cannon to work with Dr. Bass, Mr. Dunn and Ms. Palley to obtain answers to the questions that were discussed here in order to move forward with the hiring of a SSCO officer (moved by Barb Higgins, seconded by Ms. Patterson).

Ms. Palley described a considerable number of initiatives that were in place in the District, had been established over 6-8 months with a variety of partnerships statewide, or were in the planning stages.

- Student Safety and Well-Being strategic planning task force
- Safety training for all new staff offered on a monthly basis
- Ongoing work with Project Grow
- Gathering student and staff input on proposed policies with student Board representatives

- ACERT, of which Concord is a founding member: a group for children who have been exposed to violence in the community
- 40-member social-emotional learning task force has utilized an outside facilitator and is focusing on best practices, with the goal of developing a white paper. The group was mapping interventions in programs currently in place and looking for any gaps. This data-driven, targeted group was studying the best research-based interventions to be offered and would endorse specific competencies.

Mr. Crush asked whether, in light of the increased education and many good partnerships the District has established, its response would be different this year from last year regarding the alleged assaults. Ms. Palley commented that, with some changes in policies and procedures, the strengthening of partnerships and ongoing conversations would mean that everyone had heightened awareness of the resources available in the community. Mr. Crush asked how the partnerships would help students, teachers and the community; how they would impact things differently. Mr. Parker asked how this would apply to behaviors in the classroom. Ms. Patterson noted again that changing a culture was a long process and was going to take a long time; perhaps longer than September 2020. Liza Poinier asked about the new tip reporting system. Dr. Bass, in conclusion, said he was continually working on a sense of collegiality and communication.

Agenda Item 4. Public Comment– agenda items only

Concord student Connor Fennessy commented that CMS should have a longer lunch time, as kids need to have enough time to eat and digest their food. He suggested increasing lunch time from 20 minutes to 30 minutes, and having two grades eat lunch together. (K and 1; 2 and 3; 4 and 5). Danielle Smith commented that her children at BMS feel they also do not have enough time for lunch.

Dr. Bass commented that the lowest legal limit for lunchtime is 20 minutes. He would report to the Board with some thoughts on this.

Agenda Item 5. Approval of Board Minutes

Ms. Patterson reviewed the minutes of the regular Board meeting on December 9, 2019.

The Board voted 9–0 to approve the minutes of the regular monthly meeting on December 9, 2019 (moved by Mr. Crush, seconded by Ms. Higgins).

Agenda Item 6. Recognitions/Reports

CHS math teacher Nicole Barnett presented “Mathematics Connections,” with several examples of advanced geometry using a compass and a straight edge. She described the rubrics she had been using for competencies in her classes, including modeling,

vocabulary and communication. She presented with her students Allen Yap, Grace Murray and Quinn Marino. Ms. Barnett presented her student Will Chorlian's work.

Student Board representatives Gaven Brown and Alice Richards provided notes on events at CHS. Just before the winter break, the high school hosted its annual winter assembly, concluding the annual canned food drive and supporting performing arts peers. In previous years CHS winter spirit week was focused on dressing up for daily themes, but this year, each day of the week was dedicated to a different "actions" theme. One day that truly stood out was dedicated to Mr. Connolly and focused on saying hello to everybody they saw. Students wore nametags and gave a friendly hello around every corner. Ms. Richards and Mr. Brown have continued to collect data for draft Policy #437 Employee-Student Relations. Working with Ms. Palley, they went through the student survey data and comments, and created a comprehensive report which they presented to the committee. The students reviewed each specific piece of the policy. Staff feedback was also discussed, as well as where student and staff opinions overlapped. They have since suggested updates to the policy and specified which points were acceptable as is. They plan to report back to students and staff this month on the survey findings and express our thanks for all those who took time for the survey. Next week, students at all grade levels will be taking their mid-year and final exams for many of the classes they participate in.

Concord TV Executive Director Josh Hardy presented highlights from the organization's annual report. As part of its 5-year contract with the City of Concord and Concord School District, an annual report is created each year. ConcordTV has streamed *Poetry Out Loud* alive; recorded CHS graduation, awards ceremonies and school concerts. Dr. Bass has recorded several shows. Regarding reports about low audio on Channel 6, ConcordTV had recently tested a new piece of hardware and planned to purchase and install the same item in the Board room. He said that online streaming had better sound quality. Comcast would install, when all three locations were ready.

Ms. Patterson provided an update on the Superintendent search process. NESDEC was hired to support the search and a vacancy announcement has been disseminated. The Board would have a public meeting with NESDEC on January 16 to discuss the process, to include an agenda and a timeline. While a screening committee would be assembled, the final decision would rest with the Board. Ms. Poinier asked that the search committee composition be discussed at that meeting.

Agenda Item 7. Communications and Policy Committee

Ms. Patterson noted that the Committee had met on December 16 to discuss feedback from students and staff on proposed policy #437 Employee-Student Relations. Board representatives Gaven Brown and Alice Richards had worked with Donna Palley and CHS Assistant Principal Tim Herbert to advertise the survey that was sent to CHS students, and to compile the results. They reported results from approximately 1,100 students on each of the 18 points of the policy. Ms. Palley reported on staff results from

approximately 500 teachers. She then reviewed the status of several policies related to student safety that had been addressed over the summer, noting that other student-related policies to be discussed in the near future included Policy #430/536.1 Restraint and Seclusion, and the special education manual. She also discussed a student safety strategic planning group, charged with developing a plan in response to recommendations in the Perkins report, that has gotten underway. The group includes five students, partners, parents and staff.

Agenda Item 8. Instructional Committee

Danielle Smith presented the report of the meeting on December 18, during which the annual enrollment report was presented. Enrollments had continued to decline (14% over 10 years; 2% fewer students over the last year). CHS average class size was 21. CRTC numbers have continued to grow, and programs like the mid-level health worker program were in high demand; CRTC Director Steve Rothenberg said he would like to develop a certificate program in this area. The special education student population has continued to grow (currently 15% of the total elementary population), mostly related to emotional issues. This past July, the US DOE and NH DOE dropped testing score thresholds for ELL students, meaning that 78 students no longer qualify for ELL services. In response to a question from Mr. Croteau about how the District supports homeless students, Ms. Palley noted that transportation is provided; guidance counselors/homeless liaisons provide clothing and backpacks; Title I covers meals and weekend food for students. Homeless students are covered under the McKinney-Vento Act. Mr. Crush noted that Student Services Director Bob Belmont had met with all special education parents last week to review the special education manual. He proposed moving that topic to later in the year, suggesting that work groups might address specific topics. Ms. Cannon noted that special education parents needed to feel heard, and there were at times very high emotions running through conversations. Mr. Croteau suggested that in its haste to be careful about the Policy #430 Restraint and Seclusion, the Board may have tied the hands of staff dealing with very challenging behaviors. Ms. Poinier suggested that special education teachers be present when the restraint/seclusion policy was reviewed. Ms. Patterson suggested preparing a presentation on Policy #430 Restraint and Seclusion for the January 23 meeting, and that the parent group continue to review the special education manual. She noted that the language in Policy #430 Restraint and Seclusion was very specific by NH law; but that it could be difficult to interpret this language. She suggested that the Committee consider recommendations about how to achieve a common interpretation. Mr. Crush said he was surprised that Policy #430 Restraint and Seclusion was not part of the special education manual, and that he did not plan to vote in support of it.

Agenda Item 9. Proposed calendar of meetings

Ms. Patterson discussed the proposed Board calendars for January and February, highlighting the Board retreat on January 11 at Mill Brook School. The final budget would be voted on March 26.

Agenda Item 10. Public comment

There was no public comment.

Agenda Item 11. Adjournment

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

The Board adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barb Higgins, *Secretary*

[Note: the membership of the 2020 Board committees is as follows:]

Capital Facilities: Jim Richards, *Chair*, Danielle Smith, Barb Higgins, Liza Poinier

City and Community Relations: Liza Poinier, *Chair*; Tom Croteau, Danielle Smith, David Parker

Communications and Policy: Jennifer Patterson, *Chair*; Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Gina Cannon

Executive: Jennifer Patterson, *President*; Jim Richards, *Vice President*; Barb Higgins, *Secretary*

Finance: Tom Croteau, *Chair*; Liza Poinier, Barb Higgins, David Parker

Instructional: Barb Higgins, *Chair*; Danielle Smith, David Parker, Gina Cannon

Negotiations: Chuck Crush, *Chair*; Jennifer Patterson, Jim Richards, Gina Cannon