

Concord School District
Board of Education
Regular monthly meeting
October 5, 2020

Board members present: Jim Richards, *President*; Gina Cannon, Barb Higgins, Danielle Smith, Liza Poinier (Maureen Redmond-Scura, David Parker and Chuck Crush participated remotely), student representatives Alice Richards and Jenita Aquino-Patzan

Board member absent: Tom Croteau

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

Agenda Item 1. Call to Order

Acting President Jim Richards called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. and noted that the meeting constituted a quorum of Board members. As several Board members participated electronically, any votes would be by roll call. He noted that public access to the meeting by telephone was provided, with additional access by other electronic means. The meeting was broadcasted contemporaneously on ConcordTV's education channel (Comcast Channel 6 or www.youtube.com/ConcordNHTV). He noted the Board would take public comment in two public comment periods by unmuting phone lines one by one, and encouraged the submission of comments via e-mail at concordinfo@sau8.org.

Mr. Richards said he would confirm by roll call which Board members were participating, that participating members were able to speak and to hear each other, and whether anyone else was present in the room from which Board members were participating (a requirement of the Right to Know law). The following Board members noted they were present: Gina Cannon, Tom Croteau, Barb Higgins, David Parker, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith (Chuck Crush and Maureen Redmond-Scura participated remotely and affirmed that no one else was present in the room with them).

Agenda Item 2. Approval of agenda

Mr. Richards made a motion to approve the agenda.

The Board voted by roll call 8-0 (Gina Cannon, Chuck Crush, Barb Higgins, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, David Parker, Maureen Redmond-Scura voted aye) to approve the agenda (motioned by Mr. Crush, seconded by Ms. Poinier).

Mr. Richards introduced Jenita Aquino-Patzan as the second student representative to the Board. Ms. Aquino-Patzan described her interests and career plans.

Agenda Item 4. Approval of Board minutes

Mr. Richards briefly reviewed the minutes of the Board meeting on September 8.

The Board voted by roll call 8–0 (Gina Cannon, Chuck Crush, Barb Higgins, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, David Parker, Maureen Redmond-Scura voted aye) to approve the minutes of the Board meeting on September 8 (moved by Ms. Poinier, seconded by Ms. Smith).

Agenda Item 5. Recognitions and reports

Student representatives Alice Richards and Jenita Aquino-Patzan described the CHS remote learning model and the transition to the hybrid model. Next Wednesday, October 14, seniors will take the SAT. No other students will be in the building that day. CHS has switched to a completely competency-based grading system. They were both looking forward to student voices reaching the District level.

Superintendent Murphy discussed the kickoff of kindergarteners, first graders, sixth graders and ninth graders coming into the buildings. She noted that the organization of the transition was excellent, with every detail covered. Teachers were helping in any way they could; temperatures were taken, and sanitizers were used. She visited sixth grade classes at RMS noting that students were very happy to be back with their friends and teachers. Tomorrow administrators will be visible throughout the District to assist and give a hand.

She said there were several problems with sufficient class size to accommodate all students of some families who wanted hybrid. Both physical classroom size and teacher staffing/scheduling were factors. Over 80% of students are attending school on the hybrid plan. Others are fully remote, with remote teachers. She said systems had been developed and were in place, including buses running right on time. She gave kudos to Transportation and the District's dedicated bus drivers. In addition to these, custodians, Food Service workers, teachers, ed assistants, and administrative staff put forth great efforts to make things run smoothly. She said that a number of administrators worked over the weekend to resolve scheduling issues. She particularly noted that Assistant Superintendent Donna Palley had worked with administrators and teachers for many, many hours over many months, noting that she was grateful for her efforts.

Superintendent Murphy said there were a few students didn't have masks or forgot them, and were provided masks. Social distancing was well-observed. Outside colored stakes or inside floor markings were placed at 6-foot distances to remind students, and everyone was making an extra effort to explain to students the need for these.

She noted that under the direction of CHS Principal Mike Reardon, several banks of lockers were being removed for more space. They could benefit by hiring proctors or class monitors, as it was difficult for teachers to watch students in front of them and also those learning remotely. They are using money from the CARES ACT for LPNs. She has sent a list of needs to legislators on behalf of the District.

Mr. Parker said some constituents had not heard from their children's Principal by Friday, and asked whether the parent survey about staying remote or moving to the hybrid model had been used as a definitive response. Superintendent Murphy noted the survey was done in early September and, in retrospect, they might have reached out one more time to verify parent choices between remote and hybrid.

She also said efforts were made to use faculty and staff in other ways; for example, a teacher who was working remotely might now work with a student not from their original school. Mr. Prince added there were six or seven teachers currently on medical or childcare leave. Decisions to change to/from remote to hybrid would be allowed at the trimester mark for elementary levels and the semester mark at RMS and CHS.

Superintendent Murphy discussed the work of the Racism/Discrimination Advisory Group, which has about 30 participants and had been meeting remotely. A 3-hour training on racial equity was planned for the entire Administrative Council that week, and plans were being made for racial equity training for the Board. In addition, the Board retreat in January, with four new members, would present an opportunity to discuss racism at the Board level. A subcommittee had chosen *NH Listens* to provide staff, administrators and Board training and engage in anti-racism work with students. Given the District's limited staff diversity, she met with HR Director Larry Prince and CHS social worker Anna-Marie DiPasquale to broadcast the message that increasing diversity was a District goal. The suggestion was made to advertise in urban areas and universities to reach people considering moving into New England. She will assemble a subcommittee to help and advise on this over the next couple of months.

Superintendent Murphy displayed and discussed a matrix (action plan) describing in detail the implementation of student safety issues. In terms of policy work, the proposed Policy 161 Discrimination and Equal Opportunity complies with changes in federal law; the sexual harassment policy was completed last month. There will be a presentation to the Instructional Committee of a pilot project of the "*USafe HS*" app for student phones, which covers social/emotional concepts and includes learning modules about personal safety. It addresses issues including bullying, hazing, and interpersonal skills.

Karen Fischer-Anderson spoke to changes that were made to the Perkins report recommendations, which were set up as a matrix, including actions taken, timelines, and measures of success. She noted that several Perkins report recommendations were inconsistent with sections of Title IX requirements that were not in effect at the time. In addition, the Board worked on Policy 437 Employee – Student Relations having received feedback on relationships between students and employees. A survey was sent to students covering five specific areas, which was later discussed at a Communications & Policy Committee meeting. She was working to refine this to Principals and Assistant Principals for implementation of provisions such as, "If employees have more than an infrequent employee situation with a student ... must report to front office." This employer/employee relationship might include babysitting, summer work, etc. The focus is that this relationship is not a surprise to administrators, but should be known, with a set reporting method. On the issue of "hugs," for example, the recommendation is that it be infrequent, not prolonged, and

brief. Ms. Fischer-Anderson had begun working on a specific Title IX website, and will put a link to this document so parents can routinely look at this and check the measures. Superintendent Murphy said staff were developing that webpage.

Mr. Parker said he appreciated all Ms. Fischer-Anderson was doing with District, but thought that the position had been envisioned with idea that it would focus on community outreach, providing opportunities to be heard about these types of issues. He felt that public discussions would be helpful.

Ms. Fischer-Anderson said that Concord School District was one of the very few districts in the state with a Title IX Coordinator. Her current critical focus was on training, but she said she would be happy to conduct community forums and parent groups, and had begun to reach out to student groups, and encourage students to come to her. Ms. Fischer-Anderson has distributed her cell phone number and email address on posters in all of the schools, and one in each high school Commons. She was trying to walk the hall during lunch periods so students could begin to recognize her, and was offering group meetings in her small conference room. Ms. Aquino-Patzan suggested she visit classes and advisories.

Agenda Item 6. Public comment

Members of the public providing input to the Board included Roy Schweiker who asked to have the vote on adopting "Indigenous Peoples Day" delayed. He thought that name peculiar, and suggested naming it "Intercontinental Cultural Exchange Day."

Concord resident and parent Gary Christie Jr. expressed thanks for what educators have accomplished, and noted the complexity of issues could not be denied, but criticized the September survey and that there were still waitlists for the hybrid model two days before hybrid was supposed to start. He said the hybrid model is a significant reduction of the remote learning model.

Concord resident and parent Bridget Christie said her son on was on the waitlist for the hybrid model, claimed her requests were denied, and that the survey ended up being the default response. She said the school administration was responsible for implementing an equitable hybrid plan for all families.

Concord resident and parent Kate Frey thanked Communications & Policy Committee members and Karen Fischer-Anderson. She said she felt the Perkins report should be posted on the District website. She commented that although the Perkins report recommended hiring a Title IX Coordinator, the plan had been changed so that investigations are conducted within the buildings, which she did not like.

Concord resident and parent Tony Sayess echoed disappointment in the transition to a hybrid model for students who will be staying remote. He thought remote learning had been going well and was disappointed to get a letter from RMS that synchronous instruction was being reduced to two days per week, which he felt should be at least four days per week. He asked the administration to reconsider.

Mr. Richards explained the process the Board followed regarding the appointment of a Board member when Jennifer Patterson resigned. The Board is governed by state law, its charter, and Board policies. When Ms. Patterson resigned, policy provided that the Vice President becomes the Board President (not acting, not Interim). This created a vacancy in the position for Vice President. An election was held within the Board, and Tom Croteau was elected as Vice President. (He and Mr. Croteau will serve in those capacities until December 31.) At that point, it was incumbent on the President to nominate someone to fill the vacancy on the nine-member Board until the next election. This was not an option. He consulted with the District Clerk, then nominated Maureen Redmond-Scura to fill the vacancy. He felt someone was needed with Board experience and who was not running for office. Ms. Redmond-Scura will serve until the canvass of the votes. Whoever wins the at-large seat will then assume that position on the Board. All of this took place at the last Board meeting.

Agenda Item 7. Personnel

Larry Prince presented two teacher nominations.

Mark Meister, Special Education Teacher, Concord High School, \$53,490, 157 days at M-6, one year only. Experienced Educator Certificate, exp. 06/30/2022, Special Education Teacher. New Position. Reallocated Funds

Aimee Knight, Classroom Teacher, Mill Brook School, \$42,993, 157 days at B-3, one year only. Beginning Educator Certificate, exp. 06/30/2022, Elementary Education (K-8). New Position

The Board voted by roll call 8-0 (Gina Cannon, Chuck Crush, Barb Higgins, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, David Parker, Maureen Redmond-Scura voted aye) to approve the teacher nominations as presented (moved by Ms. Smith, seconded by Ms. Higgins).

Larry Prince presented several coach nominations.

William Chavanelle, Supplemental Cross-Country Coach, Rundlett Middle School, \$1,350, Step 3, Group 14, 3%. William replaces Angela Dater

Scott Guyer, Boys Soccer B Coach, Rundlett Middle School, \$2,474, Step 2, Group 11, 5.5%. Scott replaces Michael Serard

Stephen Shippos, Girls B Soccer Coach, Rundlett Middle School, \$ 2,474, Step 2, Group 11, 5.5%. Open position

Karrie Stone, Assistant Cross-Country Coach, Rundlett Middle School, \$1,350, Step 3, Group 14, 3%. Karrie replaces Michele Bartlett

The Board voted by roll call 8-0 (Gina Cannon, Chuck Crush, Barb Higgins, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, David Parker, Maureen Redmond-Scura voted aye) to approve coach nominations as presented (moved by Ms. Smith, seconded by Ms. Higgins).

Mr. Prince noted he had been approving requests for accommodations for medical or childcare issues or to care for a family member. He is checking with Principals whether there

is work for those staff members. He had been able to make most recommendations as requested and hoped that classroom monitors/proctors would support teacher teaching remotely. He noted that there were some requests that could not be accommodated.

Agenda Item 9. Capital Facilities

Committee chair Jim Richards reported on the meeting of September 14, at which indoor air quality was assessed. Mr. Cashman presented details of that study with members of The Lawson Group. They discussed filtration questions, bringing in as much fresh air as possible, and minimizing circulation. Based on the study, the District was in an excellent position: the HVAC systems were efficient and the maintenance system to replace filters regularly (over 1,000 filters) worked well. Future items to improve air quality further were discussed. The Committee discussed the 1905 “Stable” building, currently District property, which was adjacent to the CHS student parking area. Over several years, a great effort had been made by the Abbot-Downing Historical Society (ADHS) to turn the property into a museum for Concord coaches. The first step was for the District to turn the property over to the City. Upon that transfer, the City would be able to proceed with ADHS to make the museum a reality. Mr. Parker noted he attended that meeting. The use of the building would likely be limited to weekend use as it was surrounded by student and staff parking. Mr. Dunn will continue working with City on the memorandum of understanding, and will come back to Board for final approval.

The Board voted by roll call 8–0 (Gina Cannon, Chuck Crush, Barb Higgins, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, David Parker, Maureen Redmond-Scura voted aye) to transfer the Stable Building property to the City, for the purpose of storing stagecoaches owned by the Abbot-Downing Historical Society and to serve as a museum (moved by Ms. Poinier, seconded by Ms. Higgins).

Agenda Item 8. Negotiations

Committee chair Chuck Crush reported that the committee met on September 15 and again prior to this meeting, and had come to a one-year agreement with the Transportation workers. Overall the agreement covered, among other issues, wages, assigning of work, safety (hand-washing, social distancing, PPE), positive tests, employees directed not to report to work on-site due to Covid-19, and flexible schedules. Transportation workers had been paid last spring on last year’s historical hours’ work; averaging what they had been paid the first 21 days of last year. The District would start now paying for actual hours worked. The agreement would be reviewed in 21 days. The collective bargaining unit had been flexible in this process. He thanked Kevin Boutin, President Jen Carrier, and Gary Ford, as well as Terry Crotty, Mr. Dunn and Mr. Prince.

The Board voted by roll call 8–0 (Gina Cannon, Chuck Crush, Barb Higgins, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, David Parker, Maureen Redmond-Scura voted aye) to approve the memorandum of agreement with the Transportation workers as of Sept. 29, 2020 (moved by Mr. Crush, seconded by Mr. Richards).

Agenda Item 10. Communications & Policy

Committee chair Gina Cannon discussed the meeting of September 16, at which the Committee reviewed the “Perkins report matrix” and four recommendations with which Karen Fischer-Anderson’s disagreed, or agreed only in part: 1. require staff, students, or family members reporting potential Title IX violations – including sexual boundary violations – to report directly to the District’s Title IX Coordinator; 2. conduct all sexual misconduct investigations at the District level/ 3. consider discouraging staff from socializing with students outside of school, require staff to disclose any relationships with students requiring in-person contact outside of school or school-sanctioned events such as employment or family relationships; and 4. consider adopting a policy forbidding staff from hugging students or engaging in any physical conduct outside of school or school related events such as employment or family relationships. The committee discussed the new Title IX regulations and K-12 employee reporting responsibilities. While the District strongly encouraged reports be made directly to the Title IX Coordinator, reports can in fact be made any time, in person, on line, by mail, telephone, etc. and do not need to be made directly to the Title IX Coordinator. The new regulations are clear that K-12 employees who receive notice of a potential sexual harassment, whether by their own knowledge or report by others who fail to report, are subject to discipline up to and including dismissal.

Policy #249 Data/Records Retention and the accompanying schedule was presented to the Board for review. There were no changes to the policy; the schedule was updated per NHSBA guidelines. The Committee discussed accepting the policy but allowing the Superintendent to attach the retention schedule. Her office would be responsible for making sure the District was in compliance.

Mr. Crush asked whether all student and staff temperatures were being taken daily, and whether the District kept records of these. Superintendent Murphy said that data was not recorded or kept, but data for those whose temperatures were over the threshold was done via the school nurse. He said he felt data on screening questions for staff, students, vendors, etc. should be recorded and kept. There are no recommendations from NH DOE related to record-keeping for Covid-19 data. Mr. Richards recommended checking with Primex about the advisability of retaining testing data and asked the Superintendent to look into this. Mr. Parker stressed that parents should follow through with health screening questions on a daily basis. Ms. Poinier suggested looking into cell phone apps to collect and store data over time for each student.

The Board voted by roll call 7–0 with one abstention (Gina Cannon, Barb Higgins, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, David Parker, Maureen Redmond-Scura voted aye; Mr. Crush abstained) to approve #249 Data/Records Retention and its schedule (moved by Ms. Cannon, seconded by Mr. Richards).

New Policy #161, Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity Employment was before the Board for a first reading. This was necessitated by new federal requirement to comply with harassment policies; a specific grievance procedure needed to be developed. There was no

vote at this time. Ms. Cannon said that classes of people differed in various sections of this policy. Superintendent Murphy noted that the new policy mirrored state law in that it protected some people under one provision and other people under the other provision.

Agenda Item 10. Instruction

Committee chair Barb Higgins reported on the meeting of September 23, which was an overview and preview for the Committee on the hybrid model and its implementation.

Agenda Item 11. Finance

Ms. Poinier reported that on September 30, the Committee discussed the budget that ended in June 2020; the current school year budget whose final version will be presented later in October; and the upcoming 2021-2022 budget. Mr. Dunn noted that the draft minutes of this meeting were posted on the website, and would be voted at the Special Board meeting on October 28. Highlights of the FY 20 budget include a significant balance in June of \$2.1 million. The Board voted to put this money into several existing trust funds. That decision contributed to a savings of \$450,000 in refunding the elementary school bonds, as it was taken into account by bond ratings. This fiscal year will be difficult. In FY 21, salaries and benefits, hiring additional staff to get through the school year, and the cost of utilities will be significant. The buildings are running at 100% fresh air, resulting in a preliminarily estimated negative \$135,000 in natural gas costs, as that air will need to be heated. The District is spending almost \$10,000 per week on personal protective equipment. There are several big technology expenses anticipated for this year. He noted that the Board should be aware that, heading into 2021-2022, NHRS rates would rise for teachers at 3.22 percent and for non-teachers at 2.89 percent, constituting a \$1.3 million increase even with no salary increases. Funds representing increased adequacy were only for the past two years. The Board should also anticipate mid-single digit increases in healthcare insurance rates.

Agenda Item 12. Other business

Discussion of the Superintendent search was postponed in the absence of Mr. Croteau.

Report on the status of Columbus Day. Superintendent Murphy indicated she planned to discuss that at the joint City Council/School Board committee meeting on October 16. She also planned to discuss it with the anti-racism committee. Ms. Cannon asked, if the Board could not decide to change the designation specifically, whether this could be indicated on the calendar as a "No School" day. She felt that the decision should be made before October 12. Student Board representative Alice Richards said she felt it was important to change the name to Indigenous People Day, as it was important not to push the imperialist agenda or glorify Christopher Columbus. Ms. Cannon said it was her preference to term it "Indigenous Peoples Day" but indicated she understood if the Board was not willing to act before talking with City officials. She felt it was not appropriate to be tone deaf to the discussions about racism and equity, to use that name. Student Board representative Aquino-Patzan said there

were elements of history that had been incorrectly glorified. As many refugees from other parts of the world had been resettled in Concord, she felt it was important they know there are indigenous people in this country who should be celebrated. Mr. Parker agreed and said the Board had not involved community to the degree it should. Mr. Crush said inaction would be incorrectly interpreted. Ms. Richards said that, while she understood the need for community input, she felt the lack of any name whatsoever might come across as taking a neutral stance, which she felt was inappropriate. Ms. Poinier suggested working with the City to encourage the same move. Superintendent Murphy said working on language to reflect inclusion also reflects what the District was all about. Maureen Redmond-Scura commented that the students had been eloquent and done their research. She noted the day was listed both ways in many places on the Internet.

The Board voted by roll call 8–0 (Gina Cannon, Chuck Crush, Barb Higgins, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, David Parker, Maureen Redmond-Scura voted aye) to adjust the District school year calendar as well as in associated language with students and staff, and reflected in school documentation used by District personnel whether by remote or hybrid learning, to refer to the day formerly called Columbus Day, the second Monday in October each year, instead as “Indigenous Peoples Day” (motioned by Mr. Crush, seconded by Ms. Smith).

Agenda Item 12. Proposed calendars of meetings

Superintendent Murphy reviewed the October and November Board calendars. Mr. Croteau had requested a non-public meeting on the Superintendent search. It was noted that it was very complex to organize meetings both in-person and remote, and that considerable technical staff were required. Mr. Richards announced that committee meetings would be held in-person at the Board room, and ConcordTV would broadcast and stream on their website as previously done.

Agenda Item 13. Public comment

There was no public comment.

Agenda Item 14. Adjournment

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

The Board adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barb Higgins, *Secretary*

Linden Jackett, *Recorder*