

Concord School District
Board of Education
Regular monthly meeting
November 4, 2019

Board members present: Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Barb Higgins, Jim Richards, Pam Wicks, Liza Poinier, Danielle Smith, Nancy Kane, Jennifer Patterson, *President*

Administration: Donna Palley, *Acting Superintendent*, Jack Dunn, *Business Administrator*, Matt Cashman, *Director of Facilities*, Larry Prince, *Director of Human Resources*

Agenda Item 1. Call to Order

Board President Jennifer Patterson opened the meeting at 7:01 p.m.

Agenda Item 2. Approval of agenda

Ms. Patterson moved to amend agenda to consider the resignation of Concord High School Principal Tom Sica.

The Board voted 9-0 to amend the agenda, to add consideration of the resignation of Concord High School Principal Tom Sica (moved by Ms. Patterson, seconded by Barb Higgins).

Jim Richards made a motion to approve the agenda.

The Board voted 9-0 to approve the agenda, (moved by Jim Richards, seconded by Chuck Crush).

Agenda Item 3. Recognitions and reports

Student representatives Gaven Brown and Alice Richards were seated with the Board, and reported on activities at Concord High School. They discussed the founding of CHS Voice, a small group of students interested in giving feedback on current concerns within the student body. The group intends to comment on changes to policies before they are put into place. They thanked those who made the TV system in the school possible. They noted that the Field Hockey team made the finals, that girls' soccer scored a victory over Bedford in a triple overtime match, and that both girls' and boys' cross-country teams won state titles (3rd for boys, 1st for girls). They noted that on October 16, 300 participants took the PSAT. Lastly, they noted that the student body has been busy with freshmen orientation, the club fair, two college fairs, Spirit week, and Senior One Acts.

Consideration of the resignation Concord High School Principal Tom Sica

Mr. Crush made a motion to unseal that portion of the minutes of the non-public session of September 25, 2019 regarding the motions and votes related to Principal Tom Sica's employment.

The Board voted by roll call 9-0 to unseal that portion of the minutes of the non-public session of September 25, 2019 regarding the motions and votes related to Principal Tom Sica's employment (moved by Mr. Crush, seconded by Pam Wicks).

Ms. Patterson read that portion of the minutes of the non-public session of September 25, 2019 regarding the motions and votes related to Principal Tom Sica's employment:

"The Board voted unanimously on a roll call vote (9-0) to terminate the employment of Mr. Sica, moved by Ms. Patterson and seconded by Chuck Crush. The Board also voted unanimously on a roll call vote (9-0) to non-renew Mr. Sica's contract, moved by Mr. Crush and seconded by Tom Croteau. The Board voted unanimously on a roll call vote (9-0) to authorize the Board President to work with counsel to draft and deliver a termination notice to Mr. Sica consistent with the findings of investigator [Attorney] Djuna Perkins with respect to Mr. Sica, moved by Ms. Patterson and seconded by Mr. Croteau."

Tom Croteau made a motion to approve the agreement relieving Concord School District of its obligations of its administrator's contract with Thomas M. Sica and to accept Principal Sica's resignation effective November 1, 2019.

The Board voted by roll call 9-0 to approve the agreement relieving Concord School District of its obligations of its administrator's contract with Thomas M. Sica and to accept Principal Sica's resignation effective November 1, 2019 (moved by Mr. Croteau, seconded by Ms. Higgins).

Agenda Item 4. Update on investigation/student safety actions

Ms. Patterson provided an update on the ongoing investigative process and the District's student safety actions. She noted that the Board's central focus was to operate the District; ensure student safety/respond to the Howie Leung situation including any personnel action and implementation of findings to create culture change; and to regain community trust. She further stated the Board had made substantial progress over the past month and acknowledged there was still much to do. She outlined the work to date:

Operating the District

Progress made:

1. Accepted the resignation of Superintendent Forsten and Principal Sica. This has enabled the District to move forward under new leadership.

2. Hired interim Superintendent. On November 1, the Board extended a conditional offer of employment as interim Superintendent to Dr. Franklyn Bass. His first day of work would be November 7, 2019. Opportunities would be established for the school community to meet and speak with him.
3. Note that Business Administrator Jack Dunn has obtained NH DOE certification as a School Business Administrator.
4. The audit of certification status of all staff was nearly complete.

Work still to be done:

1. Clarity on Dr. Bass's role as interim superintendent; given that he would be working part-time, determining what functionalities he would perform, and what functionalities would be performed by others.
2. Resolution of Assistant Superintendent Donna Palley's certification status and role within the District
3. Hiring an interim Principal for CHS
4. Beginning the search for a permanent Superintendent
5. Beginning the search for a permanent CHS Principal

Ensuring student safety/responding to Howie Leung situation

Progress made:

1. Part 2 of Attorney Perkins' report was released October 31, 2019
2. Ongoing communication and meetings with CPD; training sessions on reporting for staff and volunteers; gathering of student and staff input on proposed Policy #437 Employee-Student Relations; monthly meetings of District teams working on social-emotional learning, wellness and resilience.
3. Work with community partners such as Jane Stapleton, Director of the Prevention Innovation Research Center at UNH; Jen Pierson of the Crisis Center of Central NH to develop a scope of work going forward; DCYF supervisors to discuss reporting and follow-up; and partner community agencies for the ACERT team (Adverse Childhood Experiences Response Team).

Work still to be done:

1. Sharing report findings with Dr. Bass
2. Strategic plan on Attorney Perkins' policy and practices recommendations, in conjunction with the community
3. Further policy discussions and adoption of policies

Regaining community trust

1. Answering community questions

Ms. Patterson noted that Board members had received a number of questions from the community regarding, in part, the procedures the Board uses to conduct its meetings and business; the nature, content and public access to the report prepared by Attorney Perkins; and the Board's intent to enact new policies and procedures for student safety. She said the Board was preparing responses to these questions which would be posted

on the District website in the near future. She provided initial answers to a few of the most important questions:

Why is Mr. Sica still being paid by the District? When will this end?

Mr. Sica was placed on paid leave by the Board on September 27, 2019. He has now resigned effective Nov. 4, 2019. By law, he had the right to remain in that status while the issues that led to his being placed on leave were resolved. Had the District and Mr. Sica not resolved this matter by agreement, the terms of his contract and state law would have required a hearing before this Board, the State Board of Education and, if necessary, an appeal to the NH Supreme Court. Had Mr. Sica elected to exercise those rights, this matter may have remained unresolved for a year or more.

Why didn't Board members know Mr. Sica was working, especially given that Attorneys Perkins and Bennett were aware of it?

Prior to September 27, Mr. Sica was supervised by Superintendent Forsten, not by the Board. Board members knew he was on "voluntary leave" but not the details of what that entailed. While Board members were aware he was performing some duties, the Board would have had no reason to see his emails, or to know the details of his duties, which were set by Superintendent Forsten. Board members were surprised to learn that Mr. Sica had been involved to the degree revealed by the emails recently reported on by the *Concord Monitor*.

In order to maintain the independence of the investigation, there has been no contact between Attorney Perkins and Board members, other than what is contained in the reports. Attorney Bennett's role is to be the liaison between Attorney Perkins and the Board. While Attorney Perkins was aware that Mr. Sica was still involved in some school business, she did not know the nature or details of the work he was performing. Attorney Perkins did not discover any evidence that Mr. Sica's work involved anything to do with her investigation nor does there appear to be any evidence contained in the emails released to the *Concord Monitor* that Mr. Sica influenced or attempted to influence the outcome of the report.

Has Mr. Sica performed any duties since the Board placed him on leave?

The only duties Mr. Sica can perform on his current leave are things that only he could do, such as testifying under subpoena at a court or administrative hearing about events he observed or actions he took in connection with his work with the District. Any instance of performing such duties requires prior consultation with Board counsel.

What did Board members know about the Leung investigation as it was being conducted, and when did they know it?

The only Board members who were aware of the investigation prior to Mr. Leung's arrest were the Board president and vice president. The information shared with those two members was extremely limited, and neither knew more than minimal information until they read Attorney Perkins' report in late September. What was shared earlier did not in any way reveal the magnitude of Mr. Leung's actions or give cause to believe

students were at risk.

This level of information-sharing reflects the fact that a Superintendent is responsible for overseeing staff, and Board members need to remain impartial so they could hear an appeal of any action taken by the Superintendent. Board members did not advise the Superintendent on what action to take in the Leung investigation or personnel action, and did not give legal advice.

In the week prior to Mr. Leung's arrest, the Board president and vice-president were made aware that a search warrant had been executed at CHS relating to Mr. Leung. However, they were told that police had prohibited the Superintendent from sharing this fact with anyone, including other Board members, until such time as an arrest was made.

Shouldn't Board members have reported the car incident to the police in December or January?

The facts that were shared with the two Board members during the 2018-19 investigation did not include information that would have given them any reasonable basis to conclude that Mr. Leung was engaged in a sexual relationship with a student, which would have triggered a duty to report to police.

Shouldn't these Board members have insisted on a more thorough investigation, or investigated the matter themselves?

The Board members who were aware of the investigation did ask questions, and the answers revealed no reason to believe the investigation was not being conducted appropriately. Investigating allegations and taking disciplinary action with respect to staff members is the duty of the Superintendent, not Board members. If Board members conducted their own investigations and reached their own conclusions about the facts, they would not be able to hear any appeal of any action taken by the Superintendent.

2. Acknowledging District failures with respect to Mr. Leung

The Board has always stated that it would release any information it could to the public consistent with the state's Right-To-Know law and other federal and state laws which protect personnel records and student school records and information.

It was not until Board members read the report that they realized that it would be impossible to release the report, even in redacted form, while protecting student confidentiality and complying with the Right-To-Know law. The report reviewed by Board members is already redacted. It does not contain names of staff or students, other than Superintendent Forsten and Mr. Sica. However, due to its meticulous level of detail, and the fact that much of the conduct described was observed by many people and/or has been discussed publicly, many or all the people involved would be readily identifiable even in a redacted format.

The Board recognizes the community's frustration that the report cannot be released. What the Board can and will do is to move forward on the recommendations contained in Attorney Perkins's second report and seek additional input from experts and the

community to improve the District's polices and train staff and students so as to prevent another individual from attempting to assault Concord School District students.

To that end, Ms. Higgins moved that the Board vote to instruct District administrators to prepare a strategic plan for proceeding in response to Attorney Perkins' recommendations, to include input from all stakeholders in the community, and present the initial plan to the Board at its December meeting.

Mr. Croteau said that report should be ready by the December meeting; Ms. Higgins noted that constructive input was necessary for an effective and positive plan.

The Board voted 9-0 to instruct District administrators to prepare a strategic plan for proceeding in response to Attorney Perkins' recommendations, to include input from all stakeholders in the community, and present the initial plan to the Board at its December meeting (motioned by Ms. Higgins, seconded by Danielle Smith).

Agenda Item 5. Public Comment

Ms. Patterson opened the meeting to public comment, reminding those wishing to speak that this first section was intended for comment on agenda items only, adding that each speaker was limited to five minutes. She reminded the public of Policy #136 Public Participation at Board Meetings.

Deerfield resident and parent Michele Lary read a definition of rape and described the events on November 29, 2017 when her daughter was riding home on a school bus. She stated her belief that events in the following days demonstrated a misogynistic rape culture at CHS that discredited survivors. She shared how the effects of that day had affected her daughter who, she stated, went from a confident young girl to one who had lost her dignity, confidence, identity. Ms. Lary said her daughter suffered the betrayal of friends and authorities. She noted that the Board could write and rewrite policies and procedures, but they were only as good as the people who implemented them.

Concord resident and parent Melissa Hinebach expressed her concern for the daughter of the previous speaker. She said she had two children in Concord, including one who had Mr. Leung as a case manager. She asked whether Attorney Bennett represented the School Board; who was paying the bill for his time; and who was paying for Attorney Perkins' time and reports. She claimed that taxpayers were paying for Bennett to protect the Board and Attorney Perkins' report. She stated that Attorney Perkins did know the extent to which Mr. Sica was involved in the day-to-day business of the school and asked why, if she was aware that Sica was working in any capacity, she continued the investigation. She claimed that both reports were invalid because of the inherent power imbalance.

Concord resident and parent Dan Habib thanked the Board for the information it had provided, noting that he had a renewed sense of transparency, but still a lot of questions. He encouraged Board members to speak openly. He said that the public did not know why Ms. Forsten and Mr. Sica were gone or what they did or did not do, which left

“everyone in this room” unsettled. He said he knew staff were reporting concerns about Mr. Leung as far back as September 2018, as well as students who brought to the attention of administrators seeing Mr. Leung kiss a student. He said the public knew that Mr. Leung was arrested for multiple counts and that, likely, other students were involved. He stated that the community needs more information and that the Board should ask Attorney Perkins to create a report, which did not violate law or compromise student confidentiality, that explains what happened. He asked if any Board member had been aware of the report in December 2018 that Mr. Leung was seen kissing a girl in a car, and suggested that, if so, that person should recuse him- or herself from any decision about what might be released of the [first] report. He noted that the public must have faith in the leadership of the Board.

Parent Elizabeth Girard noted that her son attends CHS. She commented on Ms. Lary’s speech and the facial expressions of Board members. She said she had worked in domestic violence in Boston “and internationally.” She demanded the terms of the severance agreement with Tom Sica. Ms. Patterson noted that that information would be available sometime later in the week. Ms. Girard stated that the second, 10-page report was not important or relevant and asked how much it cost. Ms. Patterson noted that the invoices would be a matter of public record. Ms. Girard said she had an issue with the first point of the report: “Accept that sexual abuse can and does occur in public schools; and that non-sexual boundary violations are often precursors to sexual abuse.” Ms. Girard stated that this was sloppy, clumsy writing and she did not like the way that it was written.

Mr. Crush stated that there was no one on the School Board who accepted that sexual abuse was acceptable. He said he was not going to argue the semantics of the writing.

Concord resident Bill Glahn stated that he had served on the School Board for a number of years and served on the Derryfield School Board for many years. He noted that, while most reports of this kind are confidential, most schools do publish a summary, and he thought that would help, as the community wanted more facts in order to determine what had been learned from the experience. He acknowledged that the Board was constrained by several considerations, in that it would sit for an appeal of any personnel or student decisions made by the Superintendent, and could not know the facts before an ultimate decision was made.

Concord student Ana Goble thanked the Board members for their hard work that was starting to make Concord schools better. She asked why, if Mr. Sica continued to work during the summer, she was told he could not attend the meeting she and her parents had with the Superintendent, “because he was on paid leave.” She said the lack of apology from Mr. Sica had made it harder for her to move on.

Concord resident and parent Betsy McNamara thanked the Board for taking questions and the answers given. She said that, if the community did not know what went wrong, it would not know if the Board was “getting it right.” She expressed doubt that Mr. Sica’s continuing to work over the summer had no effect on the investigation, referencing Mr. Rothenberg’s memo to CHS administrators expressing support for Mr. Sica. She suggested

the investigator might now give staff or students another opportunity to comment, since it is now known that Mr. Sica would not be returning.

Concord resident and parent Kim Wood thanked the Board for its work and welcoming the public to its meetings. She said she felt the community was starting to move forward. She agreed with some other parents that the second report did not provide specifics. She stated that her middle school daughter would be going to CHS in two years and asked how she would know this was not going to happen again? She asked if the investigator's recommendations would be taken into consideration, including a school climate survey, establishment of a Title IX Coordinator. She requested a plan and a schedule.

Ms. Patterson noted that it was the Board's intent to create a concrete plan.

Concord resident and parent Max Schultz commented that Concord Police Department (CPD) has been doing its own, criminal, investigation, while the Board had hired an attorney for an administrative investigation. He suggested that CPD might not have interviewed the same list of people, and that perhaps the Board would share the first report with CPD for the purpose of pursuing the criminal investigation. He encouraged the Board to release the entire report to interim Superintendent Dr. Bass.

Concord resident and Concord Crisis Center advocate Elaine Duclos said that her children had been students in the District and her granddaughters were now in the District. She said she was confused and angry, claiming that some faculty, staff and administrators who learned about inappropriate behavior/crimes chose to dismiss, intimidate and retaliate against some of the students who reported. She said she would like to have more information on this matter, not just more reports that would be filed. She asked whether anything would be done regarding the [presumed] inappropriate behavior of staff and administrators who work at CHS. She said there was a longer way to go before trust in the Board and administrators was restored.

Ms. Patterson again noted that the Board planned to publish responses to these questions.

Concord resident Penny Duffy encouraged the Board to provide a summary of the report, including whether current District policies were followed. She said that would be a simple response and would not violate confidentiality. She commented, too, that she was excited to see service animal and therapy dog policies being worked on.

Concord resident and parent Julie O'Brien stated that, in retrospect, Mr. Leung had supported her son very well up until his arrest. She expressed concern for her son and other students who were left to flounder when Mr. Leung was arrested and summarily removed from the classroom, stating that their grades, overall school performance and emotional states suffered. She said some of these students with IEPs were required to attend summer school to make up the inadequate work, but that it was the school which failed them. She suggested there was a need to establish some protocol in case a teacher was removed from the classroom. She also stated that, while an IEP was legally supposed to be followed, it sometimes wasn't. Mr. Crush and Ms. Higgins expressed concern for students who were not adequately supported.

Concord parent and parent Kate Frey thanked Board members for their continued work. She said a key part of moving forward was to have answers from the Board. She was concerned about whether Mr. Sica continuing to work over the summer impacted the investigation, although she had not read anything in the published emails that would indicate he influenced the investigation. She said there had been, however, opportunities for staff to meet, talk and align their stories. She stated that when she met with the investigator, she had been given information trying to discredit her daughter. She said she continued to be disappointed that when it was announced that Mr. Sica would be placed on leave, Board member thought it was a good idea even for him to have been working on special projects. She said that after reading the second report, it was obvious to her that there were serious breaches of protocol, a lack of professional communication, and failures to report. She asked what would happen with the information in the first report, and whether it would be reported to NH DOE.

Concord resident Gina Cannon said that accepting Mr. Sica's resignation was a good step. She said she had talked with many teachers who told her they had seen inappropriate behavior in the past, reported it, and were retaliated against, or that while they saw inappropriate behavior, they did not say anything. She claimed that teachers in the District were afraid to come forward and say what they knew.

Concord resident Tina Smith said she felt the District needed an on-site advocate. She felt that with continuing media attention, students continued to be traumatized, and that they did not feel comfortable talking with staff or administrators. She noted that services provided by the Crisis Center were local, free and available to students and staff.

Concord resident Dellie Champagne noted that, at a previous meeting, a hotline was being considered. She said that calls should not be received by a District employee, but rather by an independent, qualified investigator.

Concord resident Lisabritt Solsky thanked the Board for accepting Mr. Sica's resignation. She stated that her family had been navigating an issue aside from this matter and felt that CHS administrators were ineffective. She said she hoped the Board would find an interim Principal quickly, as students and staff deserve good leadership.

Concord student Charlotte Goble thanked Board members. She said it was difficult to hear that a CHS administrator wrote an email supporting Mr. Sica "100%."

Deerfield resident Don Lary commented that his daughter's experience has affected his own relationship with his daughter, and that not one administrator showed her compassion or empathy for what she had experienced. He said that any student who had gone through something traumatic and not reported, had been left behind.

Agenda Item 6. Approval of Board minutes

Ms. Patterson asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the Board meetings on October 7 through November 1.

The Board voted 9-0 to approve the minutes of the October 7 Board meeting, the two Board meetings on October 28 on the bond resolution and finalizing the FY 20 budget, the October 30 Board meeting and the November 1 Board meeting (moved by Mr. Croteau, seconded by Mr. Crush).

Mr. Croteau noted that on October 23 the city valuation was received. There was a decrease in the school tax rate of 1.04% and in the state tax rate of 4.21% for a combined decrease of 1.48%.

Business Administrator Jack Dunn noted a clerical error on the minutes of September 30 and asked for a Board vote to approve a change in the language indicating that “Board members voted 7-0” in place of “Committee members voted 4-0.” The Board members did in fact vote 7-0, but the minutes needed to be corrected. Mr. Richards moved to approve the minutes from the September 30 meeting with the text change as noted.

The Board voted 9-0 to approve the minutes of the September 30, 2019 Board meeting with the text change as noted (moved by Mr. Richards, seconded by Nancy Kane).

Agenda Item 7. Other recognitions

Beaver Meadow Principal Michele Vance introduced school counselor Ashley Barsaleau and her therapy dog Hazel. Teachers, paraprofessionals and other community members have been supportive of her therapy dog program. Ms. Barsaleau’s dog has been certified as a therapy dog through Pet Partners. She thanked the Board for its consideration of having a therapy dog in Beaver Meadow School. Ms. Barsaleau shared some of the goals the staff have for Hazel in her work in the school. Research has shown improvement in several areas for students working with a therapy dog, including improve reading scores. Students would have a chance to read with Hazel. She said she was hoping to support students from K–12 for a variety of projects, including crisis management. She spoke about allergies, noting that Hazel is not hypoallergenic but is, however, consistently groomed. She noted that she would be strategic about locations where the dog is allowed to be, to limit exposure to students with allergies, and that permission to interact would be gained from parents before exposure. Board members posed a few questions about allergies. The Board expressed support for the project.

Agenda Item 8. Personnel

Mr. Crush presented the nomination for the interim Superintendent. He said that Dr. Bass had an extensive educational background as a teacher, Assistant Principal, Principal, and Superintendent. He discussed Dr. Bass’ values, which include communication with parents, students, staff; follow-through and timely resolution of issues; common sense and knowledge.

Dr. Bass said he hoped to assist Board in the long journey to healing within the community. While he had prepared remarks, he said he had clearly heard the depth of pain, fear, sense of abandonment, anger and frustration among those commenting. He said he would not have gotten this depth if he had not been present at the meeting. He stated that staff would not find him in his office often unless he had a scheduled appointment. He said he was a believer in quality classroom experience, and would spend several hours each day at the high school until an interim Principal was hired. He stated that emails and calls to him would be returned within 24 hours, as it was frustrating not to hear back. He suggested that members of the public make an appointment with him if they had significant issues. He stated that the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent need to know about every event, and encouraged community members to bring issues to them and allow them to have a chance to respond. He said it was the Superintendent's responsibility to ensure all staff were credentialed, and that he would personally double-check with DOE to ensure credentialing was done in a timely manner. He spoke highly of the District's mission statement, and said he would address the cultivation of an ethos of trust.

Franklyn Bass, Ph.D., Interim Superintendent, Concord School District, \$750 per diem, 95 days, M/Th/F, one year only, Experienced Educator Certificate, Superintendent, expires 06/30/22. Frank replaces Terri Forsten – resignation. He would start on Thursday Nov. 7.

Ms. Patterson pointed out that the Board had voted on November 1 to make the offer of employment to Dr. Bass and that no further vote was required.

Director of Human Resources Larry Prince presented two teacher nominations.

Donna Hillyer, Special Education Teacher, Concord High School, \$44,102, B-1, one year only. Donna replaces Meagan Comstock (M-6 = \$61,125) – LOA. Budgeted at \$61,125

Dianna Matzo, Science Teacher, Concord High School, \$48,512, M-1. Dianna replaces Tyler Radel (B-9 = \$64,301) – resignation. Budgeted at \$64,301

Mr. Prince explained that NH DOE allows the District to hire teachers with a “statement of eligibility,” under which they hold an interim educational license. In the case of these two individuals, their Alt IV program would expire in 2022. This program allows teachers to be placed on the teacher pay scale; both have earned their interim licenses.

The Board voted 9-0 to approve the teacher nominations (moved by Ms. Higgins, seconded by Mr. Crush).

Mr. Prince presented several coach nominations.

Ryan Daniels, Girls Indoor Track Co-Coach, Concord High School, \$1,820, Step 2, Group 6, 8.5%. Ryan will be co-coaching with Hayden Daly

Pia Shea, Assistant Alpine Ski Coach, Concord High School, \$1,713, Step 3, Group 13, 4%. Pia replaces Peter Ellinwood

William Chavanelle, Wrestling Head Coach, Rundlett Middle School, \$ 2,570, Step 3, Group 11, 6%. William replaces Shawn Moseley

Robert Darrell, Girls Basketball A Coach, Rundlett Middle School, \$2,570, Step 3, Group 11, 6%. Robert replaces Kelvin Duran

Cassidy Emerson, Girls Basketball B Coach, Rundlett Middle School, \$2,142, Step 1, Group 11, 5%. Cassidy replaces Kevin Parsons

Melissa Pfefferle, Boys Basketball A Co-Coach, Rundlett Middle School, \$1,285, Step 3, Group 11, 6%. Melissa replaces Darius Vanegas/co-coaching with Adam Tuttle

Adam Tuttle, Boys Basketball A Co-Coach, Rundlett Middle School, \$1,285, Step 3, Group 11, 6%. Adam replaces Darius Vanegas/co-coaching with Melissa Pfefferle

The Board voted 9-0 to approve the coach nominations (moved by Ms. Kane, seconded by Ms. Higgins).

The Board voted 9-0 to approve the list of returning coaches (moved by Ms. Higgins, seconded by Mr. Richards).

Agenda Item 9. Communications and Policy

Ms. Patterson reported that the Communications and Policy Committee met on October 21. The committee reviewed changes to the health procedures manual referenced in Policy #531 Health Procedures Manual. The changes were made by Todd Poret, MD, the District's school physician, and the school nurses. Ms. Palley reviewed a few of the questions that had been raised by Board members during the meeting, including a discussion of the provision of Narcan. In response to a question from Mr. Crush, it was stated that narcotics were not kept in nurse offices.

The Board voted 9-0 to concur with recommended changes to the health procedures manual referenced in Policy #531 Health Procedures Manual as presented (moved by Ms. Patterson, seconded by Ms. Higgins).

Ms. Patterson discussed Policy #576 Service Animals in Schools, a policy required by law. She noted that this policy was being presented for a first reading.

Ms. Patterson discussed Policy #790 Therapy Dogs, noting that this policy was being presented for a first reading.

Pam Wicks made a motion to waive the Board's first reading process.

The Board voted 9-0 to waive its first reading process for Policy #790 Therapy Dogs (moved by Ms. Wicks, seconded by Ms. Higgins).

The Board voted 9-0 to adopt Policy #790 Therapy Dogs (moved by Ms. Patterson, seconded by Ms. Wicks).

Ms. Wicks asked that Hazel (and Ms. Barsaleau) return to the Board at the end of the year with results on the therapy dog experience.

Ms. Patterson noted that the committee would focus its meetings in November and December on policies related to student safety, the special education manual, restraint and seclusion and staff-student relations, for which it was soliciting student input.

Agenda Item 10. Finance

Mr. Croteau reviewed the Finance Committee meeting on October 23, at which the FY19 and FY20 budgets were reviewed. The discussion focused on future expenditures, the tax rate and Medicaid reimbursement. He described the change of rule that would reduce the reimbursement of the District by Medicaid by over \$1 million. The District's Director of Student Services has been attending state meetings on this topic. The tax rate, projected at a 1.48% increase, actually came in at -1.04%. The state decided to contribute \$1 million to the cost of the steam-to-gas conversion of two years ago. The total budget was \$91,583,548.

Ms. Patterson described the canvass of the vote, a state law requirement that applied to calls for recounts.

The Board voted 9-0 to conduct the election canvass of the vote by telephone (moved by Mr. Crush, seconded by Ms. Higgins).

Agenda Item 11. Calendar of meetings

Ms. Palley reviewed the proposed calendar of upcoming meetings in November and December.

Agenda Item 12. Public comment

Ms. Patterson opened the meeting for additional public comment.

Mr. Habib said he thought Dr. Bass would find a welcoming community. He stated that he hoped Dr. Bass would address some systemic failures, including testimony that no one stepped in to support students who lost their special education case manager. He said he was unsure that the community had faith that recommendations would be implemented. He suggested hiring an independent compliance officer, not just creating an internal plan. He asked how such a plan would be implemented, its timeline and how it would be determined that the plan was working. He asked how families of students with communication issues would work with a Title IX coordinator. He said he was aware of continuing work on the MOU with CPD, and hoped that Dr. Bass would be part of ongoing conversations with CPD.

Concord resident Elaine Duclos asked how community input on the student safety plan would be gathered, and how the community would know that its input was welcomed. She commented about the importance of teaching and training students and staff, and suggesting also including the public, informing everyone in the community about how to report suspicions of child neglect or abuse. She suggested the need for a comprehensive,

uniform protocol for responding to sexual misconduct.

Ms. Patterson repeated that the Board had an opportunity to develop a strategic plan specifically addressing Attorney Perkins' recommendations. The Board had asked for a draft strategic plan by December, and that would incorporate Dr. Bass' input.

Concord resident Penny Duffy said that 16% of District students in District have disabilities, and stated that some parents were frustrated that their children's IEPs were not being implemented. She said she was hoping for a Superintendent who would listen to parents of children with disabilities.

Concord resident and parent Erin Sharkey asked to what extent staff, students and community members would be involved in the hiring of the new Superintendent and the permanent CHS principal. She also commented that her middle school nieces and nephews had been given responsibilities to clear trash and clean tables in the cafeteria, and should be given gloves.

Ms. Patterson noted that the Board had not yet delineated the search process.

Mr. Habib asked whether the Board would play a role in hiring the interim Principal, and whether the interim Superintendent would actually do the hiring. Ms. Patterson noted that would be some Board input and she would want to confer with Dr. Bass.

Ms. Wicks said she had received an email from Deodonne Bhatarai about walking conditions in a neighborhood near Cranmore Ridge, where parents have had to drive their children to school because there is barely a shoulder and the traffic is fast and heavy. The neighborhood is within the walk zone, which was not an issue before the opening of a new plaza. Portsmouth Street has become a cut-through for Loudon Road. Ms. Wicks suggested further discussion about changing walk zones. She said if students do not have sidewalks, their parents should not be forced to drive them to school.

Concord resident and parent Beth Richards noted that she served as parent representative for the City/District Safe Walks to School. She asked the Board to reinstate the task force for these issues, as federal transportation supports safe routes to school differently from state. She said the dollars are different, but needs have not changed.

A motion was made to adjourn.

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

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Richards, *Secretary*
Linden Jackett, *Recorder*