

Concord School District
Board of Education
Legislative Breakfast
February 22, 2019

Board members: Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Nancy Kane, Jennifer Patterson, *President*, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards

City administrators and councilors: Tom Aspell, *City Manager*; City Councilors Byron Champlin and Mark Coen; Brian LeBrun, *Deputy City Manager for Finance*, Carlos Baia, *Deputy City Manager for Development*

Legislative delegation: NH State Senator Dan Feltes, State Representatives Christy Bartlett, Ward 10; Connie Lane, Ward 2; David Luneau, Ward 5; Mel Myler, Ward 5; Beth Richards, Ward 3; Timothy Soucy, Ward 11; Safiya Wazir, Ward 8

Administrators: Terri Forsten, *Superintendent*, Jack Dunn, *Business Administrator*

Superintendent Terri Forsten welcomed the assembled guests and thanked CRTC Chef/Teacher Bob McIntosh and CHS students Josh Stanford and Ryan Martel for their expertly cooked and served breakfast. She noted that Culinary Arts is one of 11 CRTC programs, which can include students from 9 sending school districts.

She introduced the agenda, including enrollment and demographics; teaching and learning highlights; the impact on the District of State building aid (HB 175 and HB 176); full-day kindergarten funding (HB 184); NH Retirement (HB 497); and special education aid (SB 143).

Superintendent Forsten noted that the Board's demographic study has been completed, and shows a trend of declining enrollment over the last 10 years that is expected to continue. In 2009 there were a total of 5012 students in the District, while in 2018 there were a total of 4422. She briefly discussed the implementation of full-day kindergarten this school year, and its current and anticipated impact on enrollment numbers.

Superintendent Forsten discussed the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced-price breakfast and lunch, an eligibility marker for a number of programs. Currently, 26% of students in New Hampshire qualify for this program, while in Concord 36% of students do. As an additional statistic, Mr. Dunn noted that fully 45% of students at Mill Brook School qualify for this program.

Superintendent Forsten briefly noted the District's move to competency assessment, its goal of 1:1 Chromebook/iPad for students; the CHS Help Desk representing students helping other students with technology; and the District's excellent performing arts program, including upcoming concerts and theater performances. She noted that CHS has 3 National Merit Scholars this year, a remarkable achievement.

Superintendent Forsten and Mr. Dunn moved into a discussion of pending legislation at the State House that could impact the District budget favorably and provide some relief to local taxpayers. Mr. Dunn displayed a chart with the various building options for the proposed new or renovated middle school. He based this analysis on the following assumptions: the current feasibility study conceptual designs; current bond rates; estimated both with and without state building aid; the availability of new funding formulas approved by the Legislature; the use of the Facility Stabilization Fund; first-year tax impact (based on home assessed at \$250,000); use of the current site; that all funds are expended; that there is no use of grants or special programs.

Superintendent Forsten discussed the Board's approval of full-day kindergarten last year, with this year's initial implementation. She described the positive impact it would have on the budget if the Legislature funded full-day kindergarten students at the same rate as it currently funds all other students. This would add over \$770 per kindergarten student.

Mr. Dunn discussed the rising rates of the New Hampshire Retirement System. All employee rates increased from 5% to 7% in 2012. The teacher rate is at 17.80%, an increase of .44% from 17.36% to 17.80% in FY20. He noted that the rate increased from 15.67% to 17.36% in FY18. The impact of this on the FY20 Budget is projected to be \$5,674,311. The non-teacher rate is 11.17%, a decrease of .21% from 11.38% to 11.17% in FY20. This rate increased from 11.08% to 11.38% in FY18. The impact of this on the FY20 Budget is additional expenditures of \$869,127. If the state contributed 15% of the employer rate for Teachers, the state portion would be \$872,641.80 for Concord. Mr. Dunn suggested the possibility of guaranteeing Municipal and School District Retirement Rates until NHRS' unfunded liability is paid off in 2039 by creating a stop/loss fund so rates do not go higher than the current rates.

Superintendent Forsten explained that the District is responsible for special education costs per pupil up to 3 ½ times the estimated state average expenditure per pupil for the school year preceding year of distribution, plus 20% of the additional cost, up to 10 times the estimated state average expenditure per pupil for the school year preceding distribution. SB 143 would limit the amount the DOE can set aside for administering state aid for special education.

In closing, Superintendent Forsten invited all present to call upon the administration for data and other information in their work as City staff and state legislators.

Attendees thanked the District for its informative presentation, noting that their goals were aligned with the school system.

The meeting closed at 9:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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