

Concord School District Board of Education  
**Board Work Session**  
**February 8, 2017**

**Board members present:** Clint Cogswell, *President*, Tom Croteau, Nathan Fennessy, Barb Higgins, Alana Kimball, Jennifer Patterson, Maureen Redmond-Scura, Jim Richards, Pam Wicks

**Administration:** *Superintendent* Terri L. Forsten, *Assistant Superintendent* Donna Palley, *Business Administrator* Jack Dunn, *Director of Facilities and Planning* Matt Cashman

Board President Clint Cogswell called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m., noting that the agenda was to review enrollments, staffing and benefits in the proposed FY17-18 budget. Superintendent Terri Forsten reviewed several items related to the budget.

1. Enrollment and Demographic Trends (Slides 5-6)
  - A. Superintendent Forsten reviewed enrollment trend comparisons between Concord School District and several Merrimack County school districts. She noted that while enrollments are decreasing at a similar rate, the rate of the Concord enrollment drop is slightly steeper. Superintendent Forsten reviewed the 10-year trend of overall enrollment decline, at a rate of approximately 1% per year.
2. Enrollment Projections (Slides 8-10)
  - A. Superintendent Forsten reviewed projected enrollment trends through 2023-2024, noting a slight, unanticipated drop in kindergarten enrollment and a relatively stable Concord High School (CHS) enrollment rate.
3. Proposed Staffing Changes for 2017–2018 (Slides 12-17)
  - A. Superintendent Forsten reviewed average class sizes by grade level, noting a collective average of 16-29 students per class throughout all grade levels, with exceptions in Music, English, and ELL classes. She also noted that one of the budget process goals is to maintain staffing to support class sizes that stay within state guidelines. Mr. Cogswell and Barb Higgins both noted a need to be mindful of class sizes at the middle and high school levels in addition to the elementary level, when taking staff reductions into consideration.
  - B. (Slide 17) Superintendent Forsten reviewed teaching staff reductions and additions at the elementary school level. Mr. Dunn noted that this slide does not reflect additional changes to the staffing plan, but is simply a breakdown of the existing plan within the draft budget. Of particular note

was the addition of 6.51 Educational Assistants to support a proposed full-day kindergarten option.

4. Benefits

- A. Mr. Dunn reviewed costs of staff health insurance (Slide 26), noting a comparatively small increase in employer costs compared to peer districts. Jennifer Patterson clarified that many retirees are on the more expensive HMO plan, so those costs will drop off and the number of employees on that plan will decrease, thus decreasing costs to the District.
- B. Mr. Dunn reviewed dental insurance costs, pointing out that those costs are increasing due to more employees opting into the dental plan as it has been made available to them. (Slide 29)
- C. Mr. Dunn reviewed workers' compensation costs (Slide 30), unemployment compensation (Slide 32), and life and AD&D insurance (Slide 33), noting that these costs are difficult to plan as they are based on unanticipated incidents/events.

5. Budget Base

- A. Mr. Dunn reviewed high-level budget planning at the elementary school level, highlighting a number of budget lines, average budget, and notable line item changes. He clarified that the vast majority of the budget increase (\$1.375M of \$2.7M) is due to the necessary steam-to-natural gas conversion.

6. Review schedule

- A. Upcoming meetings are scheduled for February 15 and 22, and March 6 and 8. Mr. Dunn noted that the budget must be posted for public review and comment by March 6 or 8 to comply with the current schedule.

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Croteau, *Secretary*