

Concord School District
School Board Work Session #7 – Student Enrollment and Open Session
March 12, 2020

Board members present: Tom Croteau, Danielle Smith, Gina Cannon, Jim Richards, Liza Poinier, David Parker (present via telephone)

Board members absent: Jennifer Patterson, Chuck Crush, Barb Higgins

Administration: *Interim Superintendent* Frank Bass, *Assistant Superintendent* Donna Palley, *CHS Interim Principal* Michael Reardon, *CHS Assistant Principal/CRTC Director* Steven Rothenberg

Board Vice President Jim Richards called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m., noting that Work Session #7 would focus on CHS and CRTC enrollment numbers.

David Parker noted that he was participating via telephone due to medical reasons. Gina Cannon addressed the public comments from the March 9 Board Work Session, encouraging parents who wished to discuss concerns regarding their children to do so privately with Board members rather than in public meetings. She emphasized that meetings were both public and recorded, and that students' privacy was of the utmost importance. Superintendent Bass said that public input from that meeting was disheartening and echoed Ms. Cannon's remarks regarding the importance of student privacy. He added that the discussion about the William White Educational Consulting (WWEC) contract raised some important issues; that he intended to trim that budget by \$80,000-100,000, and that those savings could be used to contract an outside service to perform an exhaustive analysis so that the Board could make an informed decision on how to move forward with these contracted services.

Superintendent Bass noted that he had been carefully monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic and that extracurricular/large events were being considered on a case-by-case basis, pending additional guidance from the Health and Human Services Commissioner. He emphasized the importance of following recommended hygiene procedures, as these would make a crucial difference in the health of the community.

Tom Croteau clarified that the public comments on March 9 did go through proper channels and were not made improperly. Mr. Parker expressed concern about the WWEC contract, stating that he would not vote to approve a budget that did not review those services this year, before the budget vote. He added that he felt Ms. Palley should not participate in a review of the WWEC contract if she was in charge of it.

Superintendent Bass introduced Michael Reardon, interim Principal of CHS. Dr. Reardon reviewed the District's class size guidelines, Policy #641, and noted that some elective classes fell outside those guidelines on either the low or high end. He provided projected enrollment numbers for 2020-2021, noting the numbers were subject to +5/-5 change due

to a number of unforeseen reasons. He provided several cautions about these enrollment numbers, as follows:

- Student requests were made in February, 2020.
- Requests could change between now and August, 2020. The projected staffing was before scheduling had occurred.
- Students might not be scheduled for all their requested courses
- Fewer sections would lead to challenges in meeting student requests

Dr. Reardon explained that projected staffing was before actual scheduling had occurred, and that staffing needs were determined based on the number of student requests and the number of sections of each subject.

DEPARTMENT	2019 REQs	2020 REQs	# COURSES	FTEs (2019)	FTEs (2020)
Art	721	783	12	3.1	3.1
Business	335	320	7	2.0	2.0
Digital Education	75	73	2	0.3*	0.3
English	1915	1856	19	13.2	13.2
Life Studies/Health/PE	3788	3782	24	6.1	6.1
Math	1497	1476	15	11.8	11.8
Music	534	570	11	2.2	2.2
Science	1957	2109	21	14.3	14.3
Social Studies	2350	2369	16	11.6	11.6
Tech Ed	228	202	5	1.0	1.0
World Language	834	831	20	7.2	7.2**
TOTAL	14,234	14,371		72.8	72.8

Dr. Reardon provided course registration numbers and projected staffing. Mr. Croteau asked why, with English class enrollment numbers down, the number of FTEs had remained the same. Dr. Reardon explained that these numbers allow for smaller class sizes, which was categorically preferable, and that elimination of these positions would be problematic in the next year's budget. He added that this could be detrimental if course enrollments again increased and that he was hesitant to fractionalize positions. Mr. Richards asked what it would take for Dr. Reardon to consider dropping or adding a teacher; Dr. Reardon explained that it would take a significant, dramatic drop or increase in course requests for him to consider dropping or adding a teacher. Ms. Cannon clarified that there were several sections of each level/type of course (i.e. chemistry and biology for science, English 9 and 10 for English). Dr. Reardon explained that the number of requests overall was quite stable. He reviewed enrollment and class sizes by department, taking into consideration all the classes and all the sections.

DEPARTMENT	AVERAGE CLASS SIZE	RANGE
Art	23.4	16-30
Business	25.2	19-30
Digital Education	24.8	23-26

English	23.5	17-30
Life Studies/Health/PE	29	24-30
Math	23.6	18-25
Music	35.25	16-66
Science	22.5	16-28
Social Studies	26.2	18-30
Tech Ed	24.8	15-30
World Language	22.3	13-29

He emphasized the academic value of smaller class sizes. Mr. Croteau asked about the large range of music class sizes. Dr. Reardon clarified that this included larger performance groups such as band and orchestra. Mr. Richards commented that the increased number of student course requests in lieu of free periods was encouraging. Dr. Reardon provided some examples of changes at CHS.

Art:

More: Intro Digital Art and Design (3 to 4) and Color and Design (11-12)
 Less: Sculpture class is not running a section

Business:

More: Computer Business Applications (1 to 2) and Money Management (5 to 6)
 Less: AP Economics (2 to 1)

English:

More: Crime and Mystery (1 to 2), Literature of Survival (New Class, 1 section),
 Advanced Writing (5 to 7)
 Less: Public Speaking (4 to 2) Poetry (2 to 1)

Life Studies/Health/PE:

More: Yoga (7 to 9), Self-Defense for Women (2 to 5)
 Less: Intro to PE (12 to 11)

Math:

More: Advanced Geometry (3 to 4), AP Statistics (5 to 6), Adv Pre-Calc (2-3)
 Pre-Calc 1 and 2 (6 to 8)
 Less: Algebra (11 to 10)

World Languages:

More: More students Latin
 Less: Fewer students German 1

Science:

More: New Course: Science of Survival (5), Animal Behavior & Ecology (3 to 5)
 New Course: Chemistry of What We Eat (2)
 Astronomy (1-2), Physics of Machines (0 to 1)
 Chem 1 and 2 (8 to 10)
 Less: AP Physics 2 (2 to 1), Anatomy and Phys. (1 to 0)

Social Studies:

More: War and Peace: The Civil War (2 to 4)

Pop Culture and Social Movements classes staying steady

Less: History or Hollywood (2 to 1), Ancient Civilization (2 to 1)

He noted that one of the school’s two business teachers, who also teaches economics, was retiring, and that this would be a staffing item to figure out. Dr. Reardon explained that Intro to PE was a required course, but that the department would likely be undergoing a refocus in the next school year. Dr. Bass complimented Katie McDonough, Latin teacher at RMS, for her teaching skills and for contributing to increased student interest in Latin. Mr. Richards clarified that Next Gen Science integrates physics, so while the number of standalone physics sections has decreased, the physics program has not been cut. Dr. Reardon added that freshman physics was not the heavy-duty Mathematical Physics most people associate with the subject and that it was appropriate for freshman students. Mr. Parker complimented the breadth and depth of the curriculum and asked where the District stood with regard to AP classes, due to its teaching more “to the test” than developing a rich curriculum. Dr. Reardon noted that while many colleges no longer accept AP test results for college credit, these classes continue to be an important culminating academic experience for rigorous students and often play an important role on a student’s transcript for college applications. He added that there was no question that faculty could possibly teach even better or more rigorous courses.

Steve Rothenberg presented CRTC programs and first year enrollment numbers.

YEAR ONE (yellow highlight = combined level I and II class)	Requests	Combined Level Two with Level One Classes	2nd choice/ overload adjustments	Adjusted Total	Target Enrollment	Diff (+ = over enrollment)	Current Sections (each = .33 FTE)
Automotive Tech I	57		15	72	72	0	4
Computer Eng I	24	12	2	38	36	2	1
Construction Trades I	61		-22	39	36	3	2
Cosmetology I	25		2	27	36	-9	2
Criminal Justice I	50		-10	40	40	0	2
Culinary & Pastry Arts I	39			39	36	3	2
Education & Beh Sci I	62		-19	43	40	3	2
Emergency Services I	37	3		40	30	10	2
Graphic Design I	40			40	40	0	2
Health Sci I	102		-20	82	80	2	4
Theater and Film: Acting I	18	21		39	36	1	1
Theater and Film: Production I	11	6	0	17	18	-1	0.5
	526	42	-52	516	500	14	24.5

YEAR ONE (yellow highlight = combined level I and II class)	Requests	Combined Level Two with Level One Classes	2nd choice/ overload adjustments	Adjusted Total	Target Enrollment	Diff (+ = over enrollment)	Current Sections (each = .33 FTE)	Comment
Automotive Tech I	57		15	72	72	0	4	Replace (1) AT II for (1) AT I if needed
Computer Eng I	24	12	2	38	36	2	1	
Construction Trades I	61		-22	39	36	3	2	18 Auto 2nd choice: We are considering moving one of our Auto teacher to Construction Trades I for one section - he is a registered electrician.
Cosmetology I	25		2	27	36	-9	2	Negative enrollment Pattern Concern. We will be implementing programmatic changes to the program as we did with Emergency Services, Education and Behavior Science, Construction Trades
Criminal Justice I	50		-10	40	40	0	2	
Culinary & Pastry Arts I	39			39	36	3	2	Improvement on enrollment
Education & Beh Sci I	62		-19	43	40	3	2	
Emergency Services I	37	3		40	30	10	2	Capacity per class should be 15 given fire/EMT non-teacher instructors. 67 FTE is equivalent cost of contracting with FF and EMT personnel.
Graphic Design I	40			40	40	0	2	
Health Sci I	102		-20	82	80	2	4	
Theater and Film: Acting I	18	21		39	36	1	1	TOTAL of 38 for BOTH level I and II
Theater and Film: Production I	11	6	0	17	18	-1	0.5	TOTAL of 17 for BOTH level I and II
	526	42	-52	516	500	14	24.5	

He noted that CRTC was an elective-based program serving nine high schools, with programs in automotive technology, computer engineering, construction trades, cosmetology, criminal justice, culinary and pastry arts, education and behavior science, emergency services, graphic design, health sciences, and theater and film acting and production. He reviewed second choice programs, noting that some students enroll in their second choice due to class enrollments. He explained that the fire science/EMT programs were taught by active firefighters/EMTs and that these were unique, nontraditional career pathways. Mr. Rothenberg reviewed second-year programs, noting a slight downturn in the culinary program and explaining how program enrollments trend up and down periodically. Mr. Croteau complimented Mr. Rothenberg's work with the CRTC program and the opportunities it presents. Mr. Rothenberg said it was important to change the model of what could happen after high school, and that these programs reflected changing educational and career pathways. Mr. Croteau asked about the revamping of the automotive physical space. Mr. Rothenberg said that theoretically the automotive program would be outside the high school as they were running out of space. He hoped that renovation would be partially state-paid at some future point. He noted a potential partnership with Concord Hospital as a pre-mentorship to develop an apprenticeship by the senior year, spending part of the school day working at the hospital, which could potentially lead to the hospital paying for a student's education at MCC or NHTI to move toward an RN or surgical tech. He commented that this theory posited an education developed gradually over time, rather than front loading four years of education in a traditional college model. He explained that this was a novel pathway that could apply to many programs, not just medical. Mr. Parker asked whether Mr. Rothenberg was considered an Assistant Principal at CHS. Mr. Rothenberg noted that he was both an Assistant Principal within CHS and the CRTC Director, and that his position was unique in the state. Mr. Richards asked whether CRTC was experiencing demographic changes from the "feeder" schools. Mr. Rothenberg noted declining

enrollment statewide but an increase in the number of students CRTC had been reaching out to. He explained that there were scheduling challenges for schools farther away, as bussing was involved and student schedules could not be as flexible. He added that that model needed some care. Mr. Richards asked about the Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO) coordinator role this year. Mr. Rothenberg noted that Jessamyn Rockwell held this position, that she had done an excellent job and made some great progress, and that he had data sheets based on about 20 data points and would obtain the narratives behind those data points. He added that he could gather this to present to the Board. Superintendent Bass explained that ELO programs could be complicated when trying to tie them into a high school education, and that Ms. Rockwell was a natural fit for the role. Liza Poinier asked whether there had been proposed changes to the length of courses or of the day to mitigate some of the transportation issues. Mr. Rothenberg noted that there was statewide consideration of these models. Mr. Parker expressed confusion over Mr. Rothenberg's role. Dr. Bass noted that many districts around the state have CRTC centers and that most were offsite and not directly at the high school building, as at CHS/CRTC, so these programs were run differently based on their logistics. He added that as an Assistant Principal, the Principal might work with Mr. Rothenberg on needs or issues that had nothing to do with CRTC.

Mr. Richards opened the meeting for public comment or Board member discussion. There was no comment.

Mr. Richards noted the upcoming meeting dates and times.

Ms. Poinier asked for a one-sheet presentation at the next meeting with all new staff positions, salaries, and positions that were being proposed for elimination. Mr. Richards echoed this request and Superintendent Bass agreed to provide this material. Mr. Croteau noted that the Board had scheduled a non-public session after the public hearing on March 16, at MBS.

Superintendent Bass noted that members of the public were welcome to meet the CHS Principal candidates: Michael Reardon on March 13 at 7:15 am or 4:30 pm. Michael Berry would be available March 18 at the same times. The Board should be able to make a decision between the candidates at its meeting on March 18.

Ms. Cannon expressed confusion about the process for budget approval and how and when Board members would have a discussion about specific items on which they agreed or did not agree. Mr. Richards explained that typically after the public hearings, an additional session was scheduled at which Board members could obtain clarification and move to make changes to the budget that could be discussed or voted upon. Mr. Croteau noted that it was important that Board members voice their concerns via email to Superintendent Bass and Business Administrator Jack Dunn so if information was needed before the meeting, it could be prepared ahead of time. Superintendent Bass suggested a primer course for Board members to help them understand which items fall into each budget category, an opportunity to understand function codes, and historical usage to help with informed decisions. Mr. Croteau echoed that sentiment and noted that

understanding at very fine detail could be achieved. Mr. Parker asked what the Board was doing to anticipate economic repercussions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Richards noted that this would mostly likely be an ongoing discussion.

The Board voted 6-0 to adjourn (motioned by Mr. Croteau, seconded by Danielle Smith).

The meeting adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Richards, *Vice President*

Lauren Hynds, *Recorder*