

Concord School District Board of Education
Board Work Session #7
March 13, 2019

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

Absent Barb Higgins

Administration: Terri L. Forsten, *Superintendent*, Donna Palley, *Assistant Superintendent*, Bob Belmont, *Director of Student Services*, Jack Dunn, *Business Administrator*, Director of Matt Cashman, *Facilities*, Larry Prince, *Director of Human Resources*

Board President Jennifer Patterson called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m., noting that Board Work Session #7 was being held to review additional questions from Board members. Superintendent Terri Forsten reviewed the agenda:

- Budget goals
- Community and schools
- Staffing and enrollment
- Elementary Assistant Principal for Student Services positions
- Director of Communications position
- Debt service
- Other topics
- Public comment
- Public information
- Future Work Sessions

Superintendent Forsten briefly reviewed the 2019-2020 budget goals:

- Regular education
 - Class sizes within policy guidelines
 - Extended Learning Opportunities (ELOs)
- Curriculum, instruction, and assessment
 - New materials for reading instruction
 - Competency grading and reporting
- Student Services
 - Elementary Assistant Principal positions
 - Program development for 3R elementary
- Technology
 - One-to-one devices for all students
 - Telephone replacement
- Capital purchases and debt service

- 5% operating budget for debt service, including new proposed debt for roof replacements
- Community relations
 - Success stories in Concord public schools
 - Middle school facility plan

Superintendent Forsten reviewed the District vision, mission and community demographics. She emphasized that school demographics and populations change rapidly and that schools today are different from the 1970s, 1990s, and even from a few years ago. She presented a brief video featuring part of a speaking engagement by Jamie Vollmer, which highlighted the importance of understanding the enormous spectrum of students and needs in the modern classroom. Superintendent Forsten emphasized that District staff focus on doing the best they can with available resources and that students are always the top priority.

Superintendent Forsten reviewed staffing changes related to enrollment changes for the upcoming school year, noting the direct relationship to the change in school enrollment.

HIGH SCHOOL

TEACHERS	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Regular Education	100.5	98	99	91.6	96.6	96	90.9	92.2	91.9	89.9	91.2
Special Education	17.7	18.3	18.8	18.8	19.6	19.6	19.6	20.2	19.6	18.8	17.8
TOTAL	118.2	116.3	117.8	110.4	116.2	115.6	110.5	112.4	111.5	108.7	109

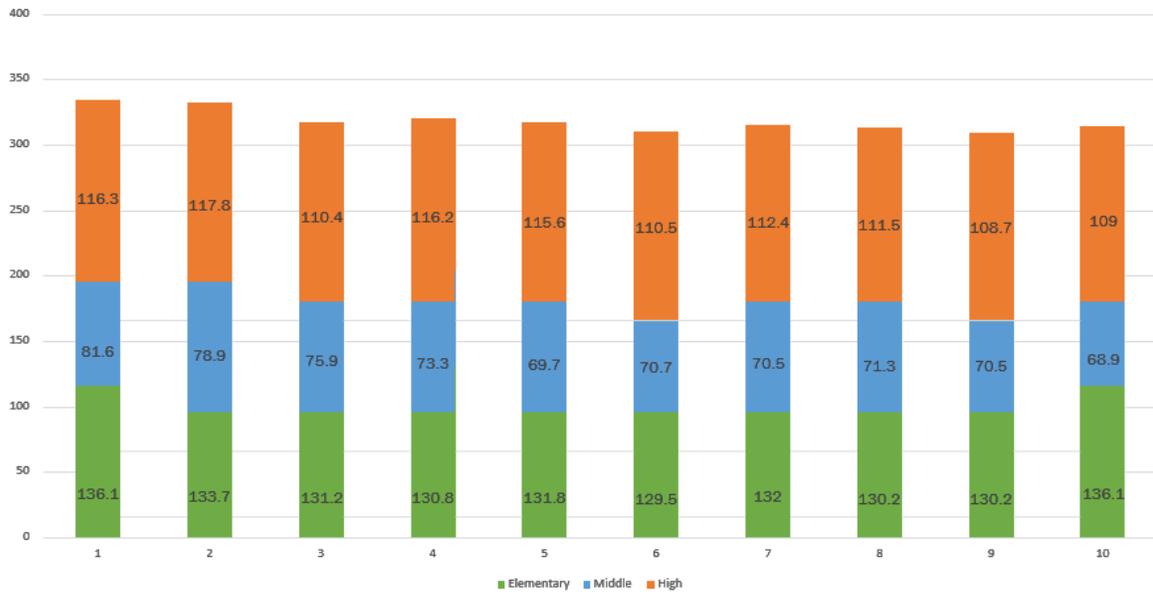
MIDDLE SCHOOL

TEACHERS	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Regular Education	66.1	66.5	65.4	63.2	61.7	58.1	59.1	58.9	59.7	59.5	57.9
Special Education	15.1	15.1	13.5	12.7	11.6	11.6	11.6	11.6	11.6	11	11
TOTAL	81.2	81.6	78.9	75.9	73.3	69.7	70.7	70.5	71.3	70.5	68.9

ELEMENTARY

TEACHERS	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*
Pre-School	4.3	3.4	3.4	2.9	3.4	3.4	2.9	3.4	3.9	3.9	4.3
Kindergarten	8.5	8	9.5	8.5	9	8	8.5	8	7.5	7.5	17
Regular Education	109.7	105.4	102	100.8	99.6	101.7	99.3	100.8	99.8	99.8	95.8
Special Education	18.6	19.3	18.8	19	18.8	18.7	18.8	19.8	19	19	19
TOTAL	141.1	136.1	133.7	131.2	130.8	131.8	129.5	132	130.2	130.2	136.1

She reviewed staffing changes over the last ten years, noting a gradual reduction consistent with decreasing enrollment.



Superintendent Forsten reviewed the proposal to add five Assistant Principal of Student Services positions, one at each of the elementary schools. She explained that this would eliminate 2.5 Special Education Coordinator positions, with a total new cost of \$441,112.

Superintendent Forsten explained that the primary functions for these positions would be to lead, support, supervise and evaluate. She noted that since the elementary Principals are currently the only supervisory staff in their buildings, sick days, meetings and other events that take them away from their buildings can be anxiety-inducing. Pam Wicks expressed concern over the recent Election Day. Broken Ground School is a designated polling place, but the Principal was away on bereavement, with no other administrators in the building to supervise the influx of people entering the school to vote. Tom Croteau echoed this concern, commenting that this likely happens in other districts across the state. Chuck Crush asked for clarification about who takes charge when a Principal is absent. Superintendent Forsten and Ms. Palley explained that these tasks often fall to the office secretaries or school nurses, as there is no specific chain of backup for building administrators. Mr. Croteau noted that in those cases, the administrative assistant becomes, in essence, the Assistant Principal, a big responsibility. Superintendent Forsten reviewed a more detailed breakdown of roles, tasks and responsibilities.

Leadership and planning – the administrator shall be able to:

- a) Understand and manage the multi-tiered system of supports in coordination with the Principal;
- b) Understand and implement change process as it relates to students in student services programming;
- c) Organize and help groups accomplish objectives and bring about change;
- d) Lead effective planning, implementation and review of improvement processes;

- e) Understand systems and organizations and their management theories;
- f) Demonstrate the ability to use selection, retention and evaluation procedures for effective supervision of teachers and support personnel;
- g) Manage human resources responsibly, efficiently and effectively in a collaborative manner while addressing student needs;
- h) Understand models, theories and philosophies that provide the foundation for the administration of programs and services for students who participate in student services programming;

Curriculum, instruction and assessment – the administrator shall be able to:

- a) Understand and identify curriculum frameworks that meet state and District standards;
- b) Understand and utilize evaluation tools that clearly identify student achievement;
- c) Implement and develop appropriate instructional strategies to address individual learning profiles;
- d) Incorporate current best practices in child development theory;
- e) Implement a plan that supports the ongoing use of technologies;
- f) Implement and promote programming in the area of social emotional well-being;
- g) Oversee the use of appropriate instructional practices to teach and provide transitional activities in functional living, social, emotional and behavioral health.
- h) Understand the principles of assessment of students in student services programming, evaluation tools, and individual evaluation programs;
- i) Understand formative and summative assessment as relates to state and District expectations and requirements;

Building partnerships and community – the administrator shall be able to:

- a) Identify key organizations and agencies and their functions in the community as they relate to the educational process;
- b) Utilize a collaborative approach for involving all stakeholders in educational planning, budgeting, implementation and evaluation;
- c) Understand relevant interagency agreements;
- d) Establish and maintain quality partnerships with entities such as colleges, state-service and social-service agencies, and businesses, with the goal of having these entities assist in providing effective educational programming;
- e) Respond to emerging and current issues impacting the school and community.

She reviewed current administration to staff ratios, showing that these new roles would cut those ratios in half at the elementary level.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION SUPERVISION TO STAFF RATIO

	TITLE	HIGH SCHOOL	MIDDLE SCHOOL	ADS	BGS	BMS	CMS	MBS
ADMINISTRATORS	Principal	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Assistant Principal	4	2	1	1	1	1	1
	Special Ed Director	1	1					
	Athletic Director	1						
	CURRENT	7	4	1	1	1	1	1
	PROPOSED	7	4	2	2	2	2	2
STAFF	Teachers/Specialists	144	89	33	32	37	33	37
	Nurses	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
	Educational Assistants	40	31	14	22	25	25	32
	Tutors	12	6	5	6	5	4	4
	TOTAL	198	128	53	61	68	63	74
	RATIO	CURRENT	1:28	1:32	1:53	1:61	1:68	1:63
PROPOSED		1:28	1:32	1:27	1:31	1:34	1:32	1:37

Student Services is the overarching term describing special education, Section 504 and Title I services; services for homeless students and English Language Learners; counseling and nursing services.

Jim Richards asked how many teachers in each elementary school are considered in Student Services, pointing out that the Assistant Principals would not split responsibilities 50/50 with the building Principals, as they would also fulfill many Student Services-related responsibilities. Nancy Kane asked for clarification of the teacher evaluation role of this position and if Principals and Assistant Principals would share the evaluation of staff in their buildings. Superintendent Forsten explained that they would share this work, and that it is currently performed this way at the high school. Mr. Crush asked for an explanation of the difference between Special Education Directors and Special Education Coordinators, and if every elementary school has a guidance counselor. Superintendent Forsten noted that each elementary school has a guidance counselor. She then explained that a Director is a supervisory position, providing support, leadership and evaluation, and that the middle and high school both have Directors. Coordinators, currently half-time positions at the elementary schools, under the CEA contract along with teachers are considered “teacher leaders,” who offer coordination for Student Services programs. Ms. Palley added that Coordinators neither supervise nor evaluate, as they are facilitators. Mr. Crush asked if thought had been given to adding a Special Education Director at the elementary schools. Ms. Palley explained that this has been considered, but that there are other administrative roles that these new positions will need to fulfill. She provided a breakdown of elementary staff, demonstrating that more than half are related to Student Services and that all of those employees need to be supervised, which is a very large task for one person. A Principal and Assistant Principal

would work closely together to determine how supervision, monitoring, and evaluation would be shared.

Superintendent Forsten reviewed ratios of administrators to students, showing that the addition of Assistant Principals would cut these ratios in half.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION SUPERVISION TO STUDENT RATIO

	TITLE	HIGH SCHOOL	MIDDLE SCHOOL	ADS	BGS	BMS	CMS	MBS
ADMINISTRATORS	Principal	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Assistant Principal*	4	2	1	1	1	1	1
	Special Ed Director	1	1					
	Athletic Director	1						
	CURRENT	7	4	1	1	1	1	1
	PROPOSED	7	4	2	2	2	2	2
STUDENTS	Pre-K (District)**					43		59
	K to 5			371	352	311	408	348
	6 to 8		967					
	9 to 12	1554						
	TOTAL	1554	967	371	352	354	408	407
RATIO	CURRENT	1:222	1:242	1:371	1:352	1:354	1:408	1:407
	PROPOSED	1:222	1:242	1:186	1:176	1:177	1:204	1:204

She provided a list of New Hampshire school districts with comparable student populations which have Assistant Principals. This list is representative of a few schools in New Hampshire which have Assistant Principals, but there are many more.

DISTRICT	SCHOOL	POPULATION	ADDITIONAL ADMINISTRATOR
BEDFORD	MEMORIAL	347	ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
BOW	BOWELEMETARY	496	ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
DERRY	GRINNELL	377	ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
DOVER	GARRISON	440	DEAN OF STUDENTS
EPSOM	EPSOM CENTRAL	422	ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL SPECIAL EDUCATION COORDINATOR
HOOKSETT	UNDERHILL	372	ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
INTER-LAKES	INTER-LAKES ELEMENTARY	312	ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
MANCHESTER	BAKERSVILLE	325	ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
MERRIMACK	JAMES MASTRICOLA	409	ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
MERRIMACK VALLEY	PENACOOK ELEMENTARY	352	ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
NORTHWOOD	NORTHWOOD ELEMENTARY	381	ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL CURRICULUM DIRECTOR
ROCHESTER	CHAMBERLAIN STREET	390	ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
	MAGNET	378	ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
	WILLIAM ALLEN	308	ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Mr. Richards wondered if perhaps labeling this proposed position Assistant Principal instead of Assistant Principal of Student Services would be more appropriate. Ms. Palley noted that most of these schools employ both Assistant Principals and Special Education

Coordinators, and that some larger schools even have additional staff to manage curriculum. Mr. Croteau asked the average number of elementary students with IEPs per building, noting that each of those students must have an evaluation performed. Ms. Palley responded that there are approximately 35-40 special education students per building, or about 12-15% of the student population. Mr. Crush asked the difference in certification requirements between Coordinators and Assistant Principals. Superintendent Forsten explained that requirements for the Assistant Principal roles include educational leadership training, generally including competencies in communications, personnel management, supervision and evaluation, and that there are additional certifications such as Associate Principal or Special Education Administrator. She explained that the current Coordinators are required to have special education certification.

Mr. Richards asked about issues or liability related to current Coordinator staff likely not being certified for the Assistant Principal roles. Superintendent Forsten responded that the current Coordinators have varying certifications. The District would support their interest in becoming administrators or exploring other open positions, and that the change under the CEA contract would be treated as a Reduction in Force (RIF), similar to other teacher staffing changes. Mr. Crush asked about training requirements in special education for the Assistant Principal roles. Superintendent Forsten explained that she will look for candidates with expertise in Student Services or special education administration, and that the District would assist the right candidate with additional training to align their skills with the needs of the position. Ms. Kane remarked that this seemed very specific and wondered if there were many people who would meet these requirements. Superintendent Forsten noted there has already been interest expressed in these positions. Ms. Palley explained that the District, in a partnership with SNHU, has approximately 40 teachers currently spread between two cohorts seeking administration certification, a two-year program to be certified as a curriculum director or Principal.

Mr. Richards asked the administrators to further define "Student Services" and various related terminology, such as Title I, 504, and ELL. Ms. Palley explained that "504" refers to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, an important piece of civil rights legislation. It prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities and covers some services for students who qualify as having a disability, but not to the extent where they would be considered special education students provided with individualized services.

Superintendent Forsten explained that Title I is grant program of over \$1 million, and that this funding supports teachers and tutors to provide additional instruction for students who need support in reading, writing and math if they are falling below grade level. She added that this grant also helps fund summer enrichment programs.

Ms. Palley explained that ELL is short for English Language Learners, or students for whom English is not their first or primary language. Superintendent Forsten pointed out that Mill Brook School currently has 80 ELL students, a significant percentage of students.

She explained that Student Services is the umbrella of the previous terms and is sometimes inclusive of counseling and nursing. Mr. Croteau added that the homeless population in the community is also noteworthy. Superintendent Forsten agreed, and

noted that the District has a substantial obligation to support students who are homeless, with homeless being defined as a family that does not have stable housing of their own for economic reasons. She noted that the District is also responsible for transportation of these students, to their originating schools in other districts or to their “home” school in Concord. Bob Belmont explained that the elementary Assistant Principals would assist with coordination of homeless and foster services.

Mr. Croteau asked which specific things Principals would be freed up to do with the addition of the Assistant Principals. Superintendent Forsten explained that the Principals would spend more time on curriculum development, instruction and providing coaching to teaching staff. She explained that constant interruptions are a challenge and create continuity issues during classroom observations. Ms. Wicks noted that she had spoken about this with BGS Principal Sue Lauze, who communicated a desire to be in the classrooms more and be able to coach and mentor teaching staff. Mr. Crush asked Superintendent Forsten if, given the District’s mission statement, the Assistant Principal positions are a *want* or a *need*. Superintendent Forsten stated that this is a need, in looking both at the District mission and vision and observing actual situations within the schools. She commented that the elementary schools have many students with substantial development and behavioral issues who need additional support, and that additional leadership alongside the building Principals will provide substantial support to students and staff. Ms. Wicks noted that more support in the elementary years will help students be better prepared at middle and high school levels. Mr. Crush asked for a cost breakdown of all proposed new positions.

Mr. Croteau suggested that the meeting move along and that Board members take some time over the next few days to develop more ideas about these positions. Ms. Patterson remarked that the information presented had been excellent, and that she was interested in hearing public comments next week. She added that public comment will be helpful in adding nuance to the conversation about these positions, rather than just the administration’s proposal.

Superintendent Forsten reviewed the roles and responsibilities of the proposed Director of Communications position. She explained that the first major tasks of the role would be development of a strategic communications plan, completing the District brochure, generating positive news and developing and implementing social media strategies. She provided the job description. The Director of Communications will:

- Manage day-to-day activities related to community relations in direct support of developing the administration’s work in the areas of media relations and public relations
- Coordinate and support school leadership teams, monitoring and guiding print, broadcast and emerging media
- Work to strengthen internal and external communications and stakeholder engagement for the District with a focus on developing and recommending communication strategies, to develop targeted communication plans

- Craft messages to support and communicate key initiatives, programs, decisions, and/or events in the District
- Maintain and enhance the public's understanding of the District's work and accomplishments
- Assist with communication in the event of emergencies at schools, in the community or in other situations requiring immediate response with media, families and the community
- Develop and implement effective communication and marketing strategies to promote programs, initiatives, operations, decisions and accomplishments, tailoring strategies to the subject matter and targeted audiences, including families as well as business, civic, government and community organizations
- Lead efforts to generate media coverage and implement standards for reviewing and responding to media requests for information, ensuring coordination within offices and schools as needed
- Provide consultation, advice and assistance to administrators as needed to help formulate school and department communications
- Develop, coordinate and facilitate communication training as needed to build greater capacity among staff and administrators, as well as among public relations liaisons in schools and departments, to effectively communicate the work and accomplishments of the District
- Coordinate and assist with the development of communications materials including print, video, web, multi-media presentations, special events and other communication activities

Lisa Poinier remarked that, speaking from a communications background, this is an important component of any organization. She noted that the District currently has 1,200 employees, 4,500 students, and not one person as the District's liaison to the community. She also stressed the importance of internal communications within the District, and that this role could also perform student/family/staff surveys that would help the administration better know about activities in the schools. Ms. Wicks asked if Board members could see a list of districts in the state that have a Communications Director, similar to previous information showing districts with elementary Assistant Principals.

Mr. Crush asked why this position is being proposed now – what has changed in the environment to create this need. Business Administrator Jack Dunn explained that the District is always reacting to events rather than being proactive, and that several major items on the horizon within the next few years will require strategic communications to keep both internal staff and the public informed, including the new or renovated Rundlett Middle School building and the upcoming required Charter commission. Ms. Patterson added that this need has seemed apparent over time, and that discussions come up yearly at the annual Board retreat about how the District can better communicate with the community. She suggested that whether or not this is the best year to create this position, the need does exist. Ms. Kane wondered how to establish any metric of success with this

position. She added that it is important to articulate to the community the value of staying in the District past the elementary level and to communicate the value the District has to offer all children and families.

Mr. Croteau asked when the Board might have the opportunity to consider cutting or paring down items within the budget in order to bring down the total. Mr. Dunn briefly explained the budget development process, noting that it begins in October when individual schools begin providing their requests. He explained that some costs are out of the District's control, such as snow removal. He mentioned several areas he was able to recalculate and save approximately \$300-400,000, including some Bill White Associates-contracted services and the Superintendent's contingency fund. He added that he regularly monitors the budget to look for potential areas of savings. Mr. Croteau clarified that while he may want to see the Assistant Principal positions added, he wants to make sure the budget is as efficient as possible.

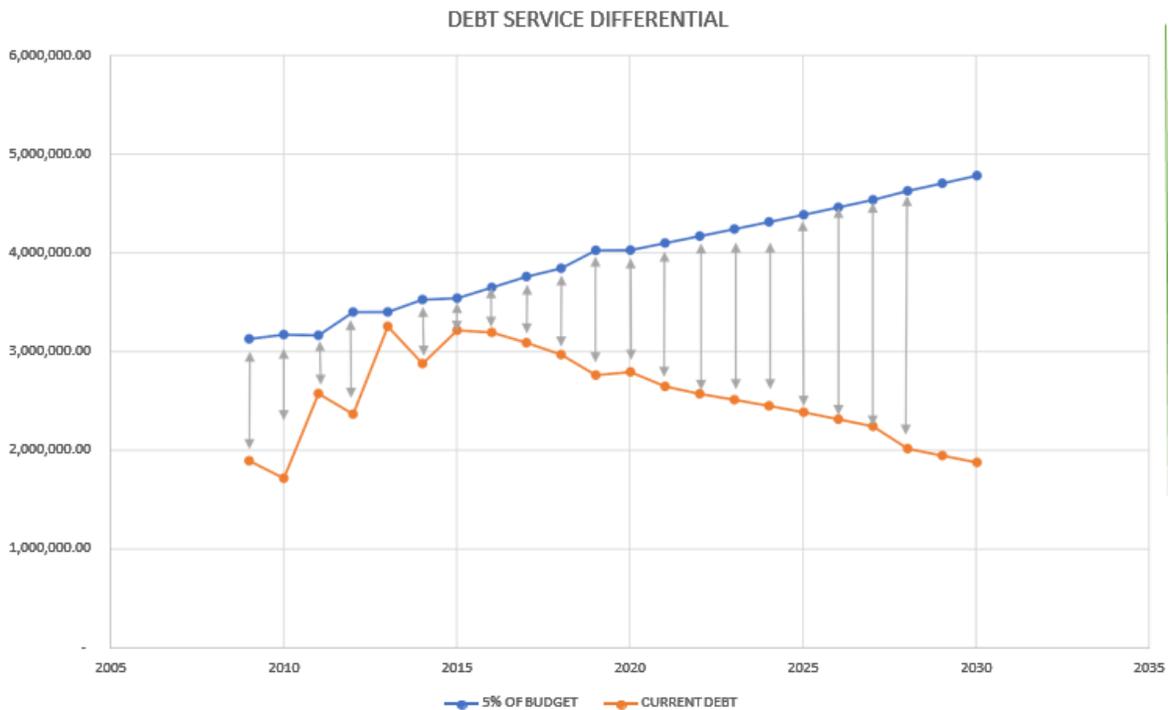
Mr. Richards expressed concerns about the Director of Communications role, wondering if the District could reasonably expect that position to increase student enrollment or bring in substantial donations. He added that this would not be a one-year role, so the \$107,000 budgeted would be an annual, recurring expense. He noted that this year is unusual in that no computer or large technology purchases are required, which is typically a large expense and would leave even less wiggle room for other items. He expressed uncertainty about the District being designated as "needy" by the state in order to receive building aid toward the new/renovated middle school, and cautioned against relying on presumed receipt of these funds. He noted that \$500,000 means a property tax increase and should be closely considered. Ms. Patterson asked if there are other funding options available, noting that one way to offset budget costs is to contribute to the tax base. She wondered if there are additional responsibilities that could be rolled into the Communications Director role, perhaps adding a strategy focus, which would enable the role to contribute more broadly and meaningfully to the community. Mr. Dunn cited a Forbes article listing "the top five things people look for when buying a home," and that the fourth item is the schools. He added that the District does not currently have any informational brochure or materials that could be provided to local realtors to inform potential homebuyers about the District.

Mr. Crush asked what less-costly alternatives to the Assistant Principal roles have been pursued, such as additional coordinators or guidance counselors. He wondered the same thing about the Communications Director role, wondering if contracted services are an option. Superintendent Forsten addressed the Assistant Principals proposal, explaining that she has had many discussions with Bill White, who expressed the importance of a district developing its own processes and strategies for supervision and coaching with in-house administrators. Ms. Wicks noted that, with the expiration of the SAMHSA grant, the District lost Stacey Lazzar, who had focused on community engagement, and that school employees have expressed that this was a significant loss for them. She expressed hesitation in employing grant-funded employee roles unless the District was willing and able to fund staffing from the budget when grants ends. She emphasized her support for finding grants as means of funding, but that those funds should not be used for staffing as

those roles and their contributions to the schools would be in jeopardy when the grant ended. Mr. Richards stated that he would be more comfortable with the Director of Communications role as a part-time position and potentially becoming a full-time position in the future after a proven ability to bring revenue into the District. He added that using the approximately \$100,000 allotted to this role would take that amount from an area of greater need and would also create a tax impact. Superintendent Forsten noted that there are alternative options for this role, including a part-time position or using a contracted service. She added that other districts use contracted services, which may be fairly inexpensive but provide limited services. Mr. Dunn explained that a contracted service may have the benefit of experience with strategy but would be limited in its understanding of District culture. Ms. Wicks and Mr. Dunn used the example of using outside companies for school busing and noted that while there may be savings up front, it is ultimately more economical to keep busing in-house.

Mr. Dunn provided information on the debt service prior to 2020, requested at a previous meeting by Mr. Richards. He explained that because of this differential, the elementary school construction project several years ago did not affect the tax rate.

DEBT PRIOR TO 2020



Superintendent Forsten briefly reviewed several additional topics. Ms. Palley responded to a Board member question regarding the cost and lifespan of literacy materials, explaining that these materials cost \$80,000-\$100,000 and have a lifespan of 10 to 12 years or longer.

Mr. Dunn responded to an earlier question from Mr. Croteau regarding junior varsity ice hockey. He explained that the 16 students enrolled raised a total of \$6,160, and that booster clubs paid \$3,500 toward transportation and coach stipend costs.

Superintendent Forsten noted that she has become aware of changes to projected special education costs and that she will provide updates to the Board at the March 25 meeting.

Ms. Patterson opened the meeting for public comment.

Concord resident Carl Sargent expressed concerns about building costs during the elementary school project several years ago and feels money could have been cut and used toward enrichment programs or given back to taxpayers. He suggested that the elementary Assistant Principal positions be half-time teacher, half-time administrator positions. He suggested horticulture and birdwatching as examples of student enrichment activities.

Mr. Dunn reminded the public about the upcoming public hearings, a budget work session and then the vote on the budget on March 27. A full list of meeting dates, materials and contact information is available on the District website, sau8.org.

The Board voted 8-0 to adjourn (moved by Mr. Richards, seconded by Mr. Crush).

The meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Richards, *Secretary*
Lauren Hynds, *Recorder*