

Concord School District Board of Education
Board Work Session #4
March 4, 2019

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

Absent Barb Higgins

Administration: *Superintendent* Terri L. Forsten, *Assistant Superintendent* Donna Palley, *Business Administrator* Jack Dunn, *Director of Facilities and Planning* Matt Cashman, *Director of Human Resources* Larry Prince, *Director of Technology* Pam McLeod

Board President Jennifer Patterson called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m., noting that the agenda was to review curriculum and technology in the FY19-20 budget. Business Administrator Jack Dunn reviewed the meeting agenda:

- Goals
- Enrollment
- New positions
- Salaries
- Benefits
- Budget to post
- Work sessions and public hearings

Mr. Dunn briefly reviewed the 2019-2010 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 Principals
 - 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

Mr. Dunn reviewed technology expenditures, including staffing, devices and infrastructure. He focused on a proposed Technology Stabilization Fund, which would allow the District to purchase a new phone system and deposit the remainder into a Technology Trust Fund. He noted a decrease in the technology budget of \$433,500.47, or 21.21% from last year.

- Staffing
 - (1) Director of Technology
 - (1) Network Administrator
 - (1) System Administrator
 - (2) Desktop Technicians
 - (1) Database Analyst
- Device statistics (*would prefer to use the new Tech Stabilization Fund or finance over 3 years*)
 - iPads: 1600 (*student and staff, includes shared carts*)
 - Staff: laptops – 439, desktops – 49
 - Student Chromebooks: 4,044 (*student and staff, includes shared carts*)
 - Classroom and Student PC Labs: (2) RMS, (5) CHS, (1) BGS, (1) BMS
- Infrastructure statistics (*would prefer to finance over 5 years*)
 - (400) Wireless Access Points
 - (8) Physical Servers (*includes backup servers; hosting 80+ virtual servers*)
 - (26) Switches
 - (1) Firewalls
 - (1) Content filters
 - (2) Server room A/C
 - (2) Enterprise battery backups
 - (18) Telephone switches
 - (312) Wall/ceiling-mounted projectors
 - Security and access control
- Highlights
 - Technology Stabilization Fund
 - Create Technology Stabilization Fund | \$600,000
 - \$350,000 – new phone system
 - \$250,000 – deposit into Tech Trust Fund
 - Decrease in capital leases | (\$647,328)
 - Fund repairs and maintenance
 - Based on \$3.25 per student for repairs and maintenance, and \$4.00 per student for general supplies
 - Decrease in supplies, books, and utilities | (\$21,937.98)
 - Level fund dues, fees and contingency

Pam McLeod highlighted the goal of emphasizing a 1:1 student-to-device ratio in grades 1-12; Chromebooks for grades 3-12; and staff-focused initiatives.

- Student focus
 - Student devices: fully 1-to-1 in FY18, grades 1-12
 - iPads: PreK-2
 - Chromebooks: grades 3-12 (grade 3 moved from iPads to Chromebooks in FY19)
 - STEM grants: robotics, virtual reality, maker spaces, coding (continued)
 - Competency-based reporting (continued)
 - Take-home Chromebooks for grades 8-12 (continued); expanding to 6-7
- Staff focus
 - Teachers: all teachers received new laptops in past 3 years
 - Secure, online IEPs & 504s: linked to PowerSchool
 - Staff contracts: electronic signatures (continued)
 - FAX2Mail (continued)
 - Production Center / Canon copiers (continued)

She noted an increased overall focus on security, both physical (cameras and access control at the schools) and digital (data privacy and security measures, including a data governance plan). She added that discussions and research regarding bus cameras is ongoing. She discussed infrastructure improvements, including adding secondary internet/fiber at Mill Brook School for physical redundancy, and upgrades to District phones and phone system.

- Security focus
 - PSI grants for security cameras, intrusion and access control at CHS / elementary schools (complete FY19)
 - Data privacy and security per RSA 189:66, V (“HB1612”)
 - “Phishing” prevention simulation/training service
 - Potential cameras on buses (Transportation budget)
- Infrastructure focus
 - Secondary internet/fiber at MBS for physical redundancy
 - Telephone services improvements:
 - Upgraded from PRI to SIP trunk for voice service carrier: lower cost, modern technology
 - Cleaned up and removed 45 POTS lines, saving monthly fees
 - Converted alarm notifications to cellular technology
 - Researching/preparing for new telephone system

She reviewed the current telephone system, noting that it is 11 years old and rather cumbersome and inefficient, given its age. The goals are to reduce maintenance costs and increase return on investment (ROI), allow for future planning, improve web conferencing integration, and reducing the cost of calls.

- Current system is 11 years old
 - Management and reporting are inefficient and time-consuming
 - Servers/switches reached end of life in 2017
 - No available spare phones

- Goals
 - Reduce annual maintenance costs and increase ROI
 - Plan 10 years out
 - Improve efficiency of communications
 - Support integrated web conferencing
 - Reduce cost of calls
 - Continue to support life safety and integrations with e911, PA systems

Ms. McLeod and Mr. Dunn reviewed new and ongoing software programs used throughout the District by staff and students.

- Operational
 - PowerSchool: student management software | \$26,500
 - Shorecare/new: telephone system support subscription | \$28,000
 - MUNIS: ERP system to manage District HR and finances | \$61,000
 - VersaTrans: bus route system | \$7,400
 - Lightspeed content filtering | \$19,200
 - Microsoft agreement: server, desktop operating system, and office licenses | \$34,500
 - PowerSchool online registration | \$11,000
 - SWIS/CICO | \$3,500
 - Various monitoring and backup tools: Carbonite, Monitis server monitoring, Adobe, PaperCut, ManageEngine, and PTC Wizard
- Student learning
 - Dreambox (math) | \$31,000 - fully funded by GF in FY18
 - Lexia Core 5 (reading) | \$50,000 – fully funded by GF in FY18
 - BrainPop | \$1,700
 - RazKids | \$1,600
 - Apps | \$7,500
 - Newsela | \$1,500
 - Destiny software: library management system | \$6,500
 - Typing Club | \$2,100

Mr. Dunn provided an overview of the technology budget, noting that it totaled \$1,610,130.04, a decrease of 21.21% from last year. He provided future technology considerations, including network infrastructure upgrades, classroom projectors, a citywide fiber plan (estimated for 2025-2027), a data governance plan, and how a new RMS building could incorporate technology. He reviewed the technology revenue, pointing out a significant spike in 2017 due to the District's eligibility for significant Category II funding. He explained that the FCC's e-Rate program makes telecommunications and information services affordable for schools and libraries. With funding from the Universal Service Fund, e-Rate provides discounts for telecommunications, internet access and internal connections to eligible schools and libraries. He explained that cell phones, landlines, and PRIs are no longer eligible for a federal reimbursement, which is why funding declined 20% per year starting in FY16. Only internet connections are currently eligible for these funds.

Mr. Dunn reviewed security infrastructure grants, comparing the dollar amounts requested vs. the dollar amounts provided by the state. He noted that the District is adjusting quotes toward the lower end in order to meet the state’s numbers while still getting what the District needs.

Concord High School highlights

	Requested	State (%)	State (\$)	District obligation
Surveillance	354,632.00	80%	283,705.60	70,926.40
Access control	589,089.00	80%	471,271.20	117,817.80
TOTALS	943,721.00		754,976.80	188,744.20

Elementary schools’ highlights

	CSD Request	Award (\$)	Award (%)	State Award Letter	Award Letter (%)
ADS	92,730.00	74,184.00	0.80	74,184.00	0.80
BMS	153,670.00	122,936.00	0.80	100,000.00	0.65
BGS	152,680.00	122,144.00	0.80	100,000.00	0.65
CMS	99,000.00	79,200.00	0.80	79,200.00	0.80
MBS	115,500.00	92,400.00	0.80	92,000.00	0.80
TOTAL	613,580.00	490,864.00		445,384.00	

Jim Richards asked if there is a need to purchase additional equipment this year. Ms. McLeod explained that it is a rare year where no new equipment is needed, adding that she expected some iPads to be at the end of their useful life next year, but that those particular models haven’t yet been announced as “end of life.” Mr. Richards asked about adding additional servers and equipment at MBS, wondering if there is enough space for this equipment. Ms. McLeod explained that there is an existing large closet that would not infringe on student space. Mr. Richards asked about the switch from iPads to Chromebooks for younger students, whether Chromebooks allow for the same sort of software and educational experience. Ms. McLeod explained that there are tradeoffs with either device, and that Chromebook models assigned to younger students do have touch screens, unlike the models assigned to RMS and CHS students. She added that budgets in the near future will likely contain requests for touch screen-capable Chromebooks for RMS students when these devices are due to be replaced.

Chuck Crush explained that he has heard from constituents about difficulty in navigating policies on the website and asked if there are plans to improve this site. Ms. McLeod stated that this can be discussed. Mr. Crush asked if there has been any discussion around

making student IEPs/504s available online. Ms. McLeod explained that many security considerations affect making these materials available off the in-district network. Mr. Crush asked if there are enough funds in the budget line to cover the proposed security projects. Ms. McLeod responded that there are, and explained that the District found a local vendor who can provide these services at a lower cost than initially projected.

Tom Croteau commented that it was refreshing to see a 21% decrease in the budget and congratulated Ms. McLeod. He referenced the proposed \$250,000 Technology Trust Fund mentioned earlier in the meeting, and asked what sort of items could be purchased. Mr. Dunn and Ms. McLeod explained that this amount of money would not go far given the high cost of technology goods and services. Ms. McLeod provided an example of a new firewall the District purchased last summer, which cost \$67,000, and noted that another would be needed at MBS in the future as part of the proposed redundancy plan. She said the Board will continue to see budget increase requests in security and data privacy, and that these systems are critical to ensure quick problem detection and resolution. Mr. Croteau commented that perhaps \$500,000 would be a more useful amount for the Technology Trust Fund, but that \$250,000 is a realistic start.

Liza Poinier suggested that the Board discuss potentially setting aside more for the Technology Trust Fund at a future meeting, explaining that she would like to see funds available for these needs as they arise. Ms. McLeod noted that student and staff devices should be replaced every 3-4 years.

Assistant Superintendent Donna Palley reviewed curriculum needs, focusing on a proposal to purchase Fountas & Pinnell Classroom Resources at a cost of \$100,000 from the Instructional Trust. She explained that these resources include:

- 20,000 high-quality children's books, from earliest to most advanced levels
- Books represent diverse experiences/cultures that mirror the student body, through characters, stories and informational text
- Teacher materials (lessons, assessments) for systematic, coherent instructional progression from grade to grade
- Online resources, including video library for professional learning, and systems to support data collection
- Title 2 grant funds will support professional development from the publisher

Ms. Palley presented a video demonstrating these resources in action in the classroom, showing the different components and how they might be implemented. These components include whole-group teaching, small-group teaching and independent learning, and contain various lessons and activities to teach different literacy skills. She explained that physical materials could be shared between classrooms, which would mitigate the need for many copies. Mr. Richards noted a one-year cost of \$100,000 and asked if there would be costs for subsequent years. Ms. Palley stated that she would research this topic and get back to the Board. Nancy Kane asked if there are existing guidelines or rules governing the use of Instructional Trust funds. Mr. Dunn explained

that the Board makes these determinations, but that this request does fall within guidelines. Ms. Palley explained that the District already uses this publisher's materials for its kindergarten curriculum and that this purchase would provide the same (grade-appropriate) materials through grade 5. Mr. Crush asked what percentage of schools in New Hampshire use this program. Ms. Palley explained that it is a very popular program that a high percentage of districts employ. She explained that the authors have been formative in the areas of reading and writing instruction. Mr. Croteau asked if there will be adjustments to determine what to discuss in the program's whole group lessons vs. small group activities. Ms. Palley explained that the scope and sequence for these programs lay out which skills will be targeted in order to minimize gaps in learning experiences among students. Mr. Croteau asked about the approximate lifetime of these materials. Ms. Palley responded that approximately 5 years is a reasonable expectation, and that she will check with classroom teachers to find out their experience. She added that individual items could be replaced on an ad hoc basis

Ms. Palley reviewed the proposed \$45,000 purchase of a software program that would provide competency recording, tracking and reporting of student progress. She explained the various criteria analyzed to determine an appropriate software program, and the critical need to report, record and track student progress within and across levels in a unified and consistent manner. She explained that the elementary schools do not currently have a standard grade book, and grading methods vary from teacher to teacher and class to class, with some teachers using physical grade books or Excel spreadsheets. She noted that a software system would allow for synchronicity and integration with PowerSchool and Google Classroom while being intuitive, accessible and customizable. Ms. Patterson asked if any of the District's current software programs could serve this purpose. Ms. Palley explained that none of the current software programs adequately meet all the needs. Mr. Richards asked if this would be a one-time purchase or if there would be annual licensing fees. Ms. Palley confirmed that there would be annual fees.

Mr. Croteau commented that grading is a big topic in the education community, noting discussion about topics such as the amount of homework, how or whether homework is factored into final grades, whether or not tests are given, and how much weight test scores are given. He asked if the curriculum committees discuss how teachers within each school/grade are grading students on an ongoing basis. Ms. Palley explained that the purpose of this particular committee was to select a piece of software, but that those conversations are significant and ongoing every year. She added that she would like more consistency across schools and grade levels, and that some of these software programs are able to provide robust ways to view assessments and scores, and how scores are determined. Mr. Crush asked if this program would also be accessible to parents and if it would contain similarly detailed student information. Ms. Palley responded that it would, as parent access is a very important piece.

Mr. Dunn noted that information about the proposed budget is available on the District website (sau8.org), along with Board member contact information. Superintendent

Forsten added that the administration has been reviewing questions the Board has posed at previous meetings and that these will be reviewed at the March 13 Board meeting.

Ms. Patterson asked Board members if there were additional questions they'd like to discuss at that meeting. Ms. Kane asked when Board members would have an opportunity to discuss the proposed staff positions in more detail, such as the Communications Director and elementary Assistant Principals. Superintendent Forsten explained that the Board will vote to post a draft budget on Wednesday, March 6, then will review more information and options for these positions. Ms. Patterson further noted that the Board is not obligated to pass the budget as posted, as it is not a final budget. There is simply a required timeframe in which the draft budget must be posted for public review and comment before the Board votes on it. The Board can discuss and make changes before it is posted. Superintendent Forsten added that the budget document provides a robust breakdown of each budget section. Mr. Croteau noted that the Board actively listens to all public comments and that budgets in years past have been changed based on public input.

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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