

Concord School District Board of Education
Special Board meeting
April 23, 2020

Board members present: Jennifer Patterson, *President*; Gina Cannon, Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards

Board members not present: Barb Higgins, David Parker, Danielle Smith

Administrators: *Superintendent* Frank Bass, *Assistant Superintendent* Donna Palley, *Business Administrator* Jack Dunn, *Director of Facilities* Matt Cashman, *Director of Human Resources* Larry Prince

Board President Jennifer Patterson called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. She began by reading a statement explaining that the meeting was authorized to occur electronically, with no physical location, due to the Governor's emergency order on the Covid-19 pandemic (Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04). She explained that Board members and members of the public were able to participate and communicate via phone or "Microsoft Teams" and provided these numbers and links, along with a livestream on YouTube and ConcordTV's website. She also explained the public notice about how to attend or view the meeting remotely, including instructions on the District website, and a legal notice in the *Concord Monitor*. This information included the number the public could use to alert the Board to any problems concerning access during the meeting, and that the meeting would be adjourned if the public was unable to access the meeting. Roll call attendance was as follows, with each member confirming his or her ability to hear, and stating whether anyone was in the room with them: Gina Cannon, Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards; Jennifer Patterson.

Board members David Parker, Danielle Smith and Barb Higgins were not present.

Interim Superintendent Frank Bass, Business Administrator Jack Dunn and Assistant Superintendent Donna Palley were present at the SAU; Director of Human Resources Larry Prince and Director of Facilities Matt Cashman participated remotely.

Ms. Patterson noted that this was a planning meeting for the May Board meeting.

Superintendent Bass described the recent ad hoc Board committee convened to discuss a study of the District's special education services. He proposed hearing from Mr. Nate Levenson at the May Board meeting regarding his proposed study. Superintendent Bass said he planned to use leftover money from this year's budget to start the study, then make this a budget item in next year's budget. Mr. Levenson wanted to start this summer, particularly to assemble strategic team. Superintendent Bass said he would send Mr. Levenson's proposal to all Board members and make it available on the District website.

Superintendent Bass noted that he created a show on Concord TV with three entrepreneurial students: Charlie Duston, a grade 5 BMS student, created an electronic newspaper. Middle schooler Courtney Renaud, concerned about her grandparents, decided

to make masks for them and is now making masks for her school mates, relatives in other states, and for the community. She has made 179 masks to date. A CHS student also designed an entire computer program for student entering school. Superintendent Bass noted that the District would do everything it could to provide the best possible graduation for seniors; three or four possibilities would be discussed. He said it was important to have an update to the Governor's emergency shut-down order, as well as the DOE Commissioner's advice on graduation ceremonies. Ms. Patterson said she hoped to have a decision about public gatherings by the May 4 monthly Board meeting. Superintendent Bass said he had heard the message might come May 18.

There was some discussion about personnel items on the May agenda. Superintendent Bass noted that he had sat in on remote interviews for a position at CHS, and thought it had gone well. The Board's student representatives will be present at the May and June Board meetings.

Ms. Cannon said she knows someone making masks and would check to see if they could be made using crimson material, for the approximately 327 graduating seniors.

Larry Prince and Donna Palley noted that the annual celebrations of Distinguished Educators, Champions for Children, Retirees, etc. have been deferred until June or later.

Superintendent Bass noted that the District had received \$10,000 donations for its community food drive, and Channel 9 filmed this for a story. He commended Donna Reynolds and Jack Dunn for their work to keep the food drive going. He also noted that an article about newly-hired Safety Officer Karen Fischer-Anderson would be published in the *Monitor* soon.

Tom Croteau asked Superintendent Bass again about the plan to pay for the proposed study work by Nate Levenson. Superintendent Bass noted that the study would run two or three years; he proposed using leftover money from this year's budget to pay for the first year, with the goal to get it kickstarted. Next March, he would propose further monies in the general budget.

Ms. Patterson said that the Board met on April 21 on the Superintendent search and would update the public at its May 4 meeting. Mr. Croteau said as soon as definite dates were known they would be announced. He noted that a proposed revised schedule from NESDEC's Art Bettencourt would be presented at the May meeting.

An update on a Negotiations Committee meeting would be provided on May 4.

In response to a question from Ms. Cannon about whether other committees would plan to meet, Superintendent Bass commented there were no committee meetings scheduled at present. Ms. Patterson said a need that could not wait until after the emergency would be required in order to convene a committee. She noted the Communications Committee had planned to discuss several student-centered policies, which would have involved significant student input. Donna Palley said she met with the Board student representatives last week; all agreed it was not an optimal time to do that work, and suggested waiting until next fall. Ms. Patterson noted that it was not ideal to overload students and staff with policy work in this very difficult time. She said the Board would need to update policies

affected by any laws that have been updated. Liza Poinier asked the administration to let her know if the City and Community Relations Committee could help by meeting.

Ms. Palley noted that a group of students were conducting a survey on remote learning.

Matt Cashman said he had been taking minutes on the remote meetings of the Commissioner with Superintendents, and that Commissioner Edelblut acknowledged Concord's particularly good work on its remote learning platform. Superintendent Bass noted that state and federal DOEs had relaxed special education timelines somewhat, for IEP deadlines, etc. He said the District would look at the summer school program as a chance for students to catch up.

Jim Richards suggested a fair number of parents still felt there were issues with the CHS (competency-based) grading system. Superintendent Bass said he wanted to ensure the eventual result was eventually arrived at using a slow process, and that he wanted family buy-in. He acknowledged there would not be an easy fix for this problem, but that juniors will be exempt from any changes in grading system. Mr. Richards suggested there was anxiety and concern, especially among juniors, about their post-high school experience (no college visits, etc.). Superintendent Bass said he might use his current CHS elective class with juniors to explore an idea he had about next year's grading system.

Mr. Dunn noted that Concord was one of four communities which collect taxes quarterly. The real indicator of the economic situation will be reflected in the September tax bill. He said that more people were deferring or requesting waivers on mortgage payments at this time. Mr. Croteau suggested the Finance Committee plan to meet to prepare an update to the full Board once some of those unanswered questions are clearer.

Mr. Dunn suggested a Special Board meeting in the last two weeks of June to review District expenses. He said the District might have a higher anticipated year-end fund balance, and suggested putting energy costs savings, for example, into the Energy Trust. He noted that NHRS changes and other upcoming economic factors might create a negative impact on the budget for next year or the year after.

Mr. Richards said he planned to meet with Ms. Poinier and Mr. Cashman to discuss upcoming safety installations and summer projects.

Ms. Patterson noted that there would be a number of additional meetings scheduled on the Superintendent search.

Mr. Richards made a motion to adjourn.

The Board voted 6-0 to adjourn (motioned by Mr. Richards, seconded by Mr. Crush).

The Board adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Patterson, *Board President*
Linden Jackett, *Recorder*