

Concord School District
Board of Education
Regular monthly meeting
May 4, 2020

Board members present: Jennifer Patterson, *President*; Gina Cannon, Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Barb Higgins, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, David Parker; student Board representatives Gaven Brown and Alice Richards

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

Other: Nate Levenson, Managing Director, District Management Group

Agenda Item 1. Call to Order

Board President Jennifer Patterson called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. and read the following statement:

As President of the Concord School Board, I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

The business we intend to conduct today is necessary due to the need to continue moving forward with the regular monthly meeting of the Board. This will include taking public comment as noted on the posted agenda by unmuting phone lines one by one during the public comment period. It would be helpful for those wishing to comment to indicate their names in the "comment" function of *Microsoft Teams* so we may call on you more easily. In accordance with Board Policy #136, public comments are limited to 5 minutes per person to allow all interested parties to comment. We encourage the submission of comments via e-mail at concordinfo@sau8.org

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, we are:

a) Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access by other electronic means: We are utilizing *Microsoft Teams* for this meeting. All Board members have the ability to communicate contemporaneously through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the following phone # (925) 391-1169, Conf ID: 669 397 408#, by clicking on the link provided on the sau8.org website. The meeting is being broadcasted contemporaneously on ConcordTV's education channel (Comcast Channel 6 or www.youtube.com/ConcordNHTV), and a recording of the meeting will be posted on the ConcordTV website.

b) Providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting: We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, including how to access the meeting using *Microsoft Teams* or telephonically. The meeting and pertinent instructions were posted on the District website, sau8.org, more than 24 hours prior to the meeting, and are highlighted at the top of the website.

c) Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access: If anybody has a problem, please call 603 513-9008

d) Adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting: In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled.

Ms. Patterson said she would confirm by roll call which Board members were participating, that participating members were able to speak and to hear each other, and whether anyone else was present in the room from which Board members were participating (a requirement of the Right to Know law). She said if any vote was taken it would be by roll call. The following Board members noted that they were present, could speak and hear others speaking on the call, and that no one else was present in the room with them: Gina Cannon, Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Barb Higgins, David Parker, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Jennifer Patterson, Danielle Smith.

Student Board representatives Gaven Brown and Alice Richards were also in attendance.

Interim Superintendent Frank Bass, Business Administrator Jack Dunn, Assistant Superintendent Donna Palley, Director of Human Resources Larry Prince, Director of Facilities Matt Cashman, and RMS Principal Paulette Fitzgerald attended remotely.

Agenda Item 2. Approval of Agenda

Ms. Patterson made a motion to add an item to discuss the 8th grade Washington, DC trip after agenda item 8.

The Board voted by roll call 9-0 (Jennifer Patterson, Gina Cannon, Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Barb Higgins, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, David Parker voted aye) to approve the agenda as amended (motioned by Ms. Patterson, seconded by Mr. Richards).

Agenda Item 3. Approval of Board minutes

Ms. Patterson briefly reviewed the minutes of the Board meeting on April 6; Public Hearings on April 2 and April 6; and Special Board meetings on April 13, April 15, April 21 and April 23.

The Board voted by roll call 9-0 (Jennifer Patterson, Gina Cannon, Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Barb Higgins, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, David Parker voted aye) to approve the minutes of the Board meeting on April 6; Public

Hearings on April 2 and April 6; and Special Board meetings on April 13, April 15, April 21 and April 23 (moved by Ms. Patterson, seconded by Ms. Higgins).

Agenda Item 4. Recognitions/Reports

Board student representatives Gaven Brown and Alice Richards reported on the status of remote learning at CHS, which started March 16 and will continue through the end of the school year. They noted that CHS staff and students have put in a great deal of work to develop remote learning. While the structure can vary based on class format, typically teachers would assign work ahead of time with due dates or weekly assignments to be due on the Friday of each week. Google classroom is the main format teachers use to post assignments, as well as email and "google meets" to keep in contact with students. School will officially end for students on June 4. Because it is so new, communication among administration, staff, parents, and students is more important than ever.

A survey was sent out to students mid-April, with a different one sent to parents a few days prior, seeking feedback on the remote learning experience. The student survey provided 538 responses fairly evenly divided across the grades. Based on that feedback, CHS leadership took positive steps in improving remote learning. Many students expressed that the workload was too large due to schoolwork they received in each class along with individual obligations each student faces during this time.

In response to the survey findings, a memo went out to staff suggesting a workload decrease by 20%, and only requiring assignments necessary for student learning and evaluating student learning. Survey results also demonstrated that the most prominent challenges experienced by students at this time were social-emotional and physical health concerns. As a response, guidance counselors have been reaching out to students who were at the greatest risk, such as those with multiple weeks of absences or preexisting social-emotional and physical health concerns prior to remote learning. Guidance counselors are also offering office hours and availability by appointments to meet with parents and students. In addition, teachers and guidance counselors are creating pre-recorded mindfulness activities to further help their students.

CHS has done its best to stay in contact with students, especially those who have not been actively participating in remote learning. Absences are broken down by Commons, allowing counselors, administration assistants, program assistants, and administrators to reach out to students and families with phone calls, "google meets," letters, emails, and pre-recorded messages. Teachers have also established office hours and are setting more time for one-on-one or small group discussions using similar platforms. Students have sought more live instruction through "google meet," and teachers have increased video meets, pre-recorded lessons, availability for phone conversations, and additional hours for google chats. A CHS Instagram feed was created to provide updates, as well as to be a platform for CHS Live, our morning video announcements. A virtual yearbook page was also created as well as a senior class "WhereAreYouGoingCHS" page, allowing seniors to connect and show their support as they make their college decisions. The junior class has

undertaken a project for teacher appreciation week and a junior class page with senior class interviews, giving CHS juniors (and underclassmen) advice from seniors and general explanations about where they are going after high school and their work leading up to that. Other organizations such as SAAD (student alliance against disease) have organized a thank you video to healthcare workers with student submissions.

Lastly, CHS has taken additional steps for students to feel connected and support each other in this difficult time, such as creating lawn/window signs to be delivered to all CHS seniors. Going forward, students will continue with the remaining weeks of online learning, hopefully utilizing all the resources they have available and staying connected with each other and the staff as best they can. The students extended their gratitude to the District for making the best of remote learning. Obviously, many students are disappointed they did not get a typical school year, but they know this is new territory for everyone.

Dr. Bass noted that remote learning at CSD has been recognized on a state level. He described a few particular projects undertaken by students: Charlie Duston, in grade 5 at Beaver Meadow School, developed an electronic newsletter; Courtney Renaud, a middle schooler, started making masks for her family and has been making them for her school community. CHS Senior Grennon Gurney joined the meeting by phone to discuss his project to stay connected, using computer science and artificial intelligence. He said he experienced incoming freshman stress in picking classes, and initially developed his project to address this situation, but later expanded it to include the entire school. The software he is developing would recommend classes based on academic prowess and student interests, using recommendations based on social trends. He said the software uses machine learning but was designed to feel less like a machine and more like a guidance counselor. He said it was great to have a good class handbook, but also great to have something more personal – his program.

Nate Levenson of District Management Group discussed his proposal to conduct a Special Education and Struggling Students Opportunity Review for the District, which Ms. Patterson had sent to Board members. He stated he was the Managing Director of District Management Group, and a consultant to public schools for 11 years. Using a Powerpoint presentation, he provided an overview of how his firm conducts its work to better support struggling students. He said that Districts could raise achievement for students who struggle in a way that is great for staff and good for budgets. He stated that his process was about positive change, not just writing a report that would sit on a shelf. He described a best practice as something that had been proven effective in multiple settings, improved teacher work life, and was practical, given the complexities of special education. He said the study would examine academics (elementary and secondary reading; math and English remediation; serving students with severe needs; roles of paraprofessionals), social emotion and behavioral learning, and operations and management. The diagnostic phase would combine qualitative research (interviews with District leaders, stakeholder focus groups, classroom visits) with robust data analysis (national benchmarking, staff schedule sharing, review of third-party contracts, analysis of staffing data) to understand how struggling students were supported. He said that DM Group's inclusive process would create a shared

vision and a detailed plan with broad-based buy-in. To that end, they would create a guiding coalition of about 20 people and use a web-based technology system to collect schedules for a typical week from staff members to deeply understand how students are supported. Mr. Levenson said the work would typically take four months; with this done by December, results could be incorporated into next year's planning.

Mr. Parker asked how this would be presented to staff, and whether the timing of the study would be problematic in that the Board was also in the process of replacing its superintendent. Mr. Levenson said doing the work with a new superintendent would be the best possible time, as that person would know more about how the District served students who struggle. The final stage would include culture discussions in November and December, when the new Superintendent would be an active participant.

Mr. Croteau asked what the "end game" would look like. Mr. Levenson said it might take multiple years to fully implement with, first, a shared understanding of best practices between leadership and school. The study would produce a short, vetted, shaped list of practices that are good for students and aligned with District climate. The company would also provide prioritization: what you should do and why you should do it, adjusted for culture and climate. He noted that about 20% of districts ask for help with implementation; the company therefore keeps its recommendations realistic.

Ms. Cannon asked how this study would be affected by remote learning, and what would happen if students were not back in the classrooms in the fall, or later. Mr. Levenson said his firm has been conducting studies currently (in remote learning), particularly in schedule sharing. He stated that if it made sense to do an interim report, he would do this at no additional cost.

Mr. Parker noted that special education students had been responding to the Covid-19 pandemic in a variety of ways and suggested settling down first with a new high school Principal, and then new Superintendent. Mr. Levenson said the study would not be an assessment how the District was delivering services via remote learning. Every step would be done with approval from District leadership. His experience was that how any District works with special education students develops over years, if not decades.

Mr. Parker said he felt this was premature and asked if there would be a problem putting something like this off. Mr. Levenson noted that teachers would not be engaged and impacted by the study until late fall.

Mr. Crush said it made sense to him to move ahead now in terms of staffing and budget, as this would also benefit the new Superintendent.

Ms. Patterson noted these questions were discussed year after year in the budget process; each year, the Board does not have a full picture of all its practices and does not have a stakeholder vision combined with pragmatic suggestions, which this study would provide.

Mr. Croteau asked about the time, meeting and input commitment from teachers. Mr. Levenson noted that the work would maximize engagement and minimize effort. Teachers would be engaged in focus groups (45 minutes); and would volunteer (not every teacher).

Schedule sharing would take 30 to 40 minutes, only once. He said a handful of teachers would serve on the guiding coalition, meeting for a total of three 2-3-hour meetings. With the frustration over the “achievement gap,” more pressure has been put on teachers, with a resulting challenge of great teachers retiring, or leaving, because the work is too hard.

The Board then discussed how payment for this work might be structured, given that it was not included in the recently approved budget. Superintendent Bass said payments could be made in July, October, and March, with the possibility of using funds from the special education trust. Business Administrator Jack Dunn said he was calculating the status of the budget and the savings of programs that did not occur this spring (unreserved fund balance), and felt there would be sufficient funds for this if the Board wanted it. The cost was \$75,000; in payments of \$15,000, \$15,000 and \$15,000 with the remainder to be paid the following year. He said he would obtain feedback from staff before the June meeting.

Ms. Patterson also asked for feedback from the public. Mr. Parker suggested forming a subcommittee to obtain feedback from three or four communities that have worked with Mr. Levenson. Dr. Bass said he would work with Ms. Patterson, Ms. Cannon and others to accomplish this.

Superintendent Bass said every school in the District was experiencing adventures in remote learning, and he could not say enough good about what District staff, students and parents were doing. The District ran a food drive last month, and another that week, as well as a materials run (providing glue, pencils, paper, etc. to students). The administration worked with Comcast to make sure that families without access get free internet during Covid-19 pandemic. He said he wanted to be in a position to have a CHS graduation and was waiting for permission to proceed from DOE Commissioner Edelblut and Governor Sununu. He suggested an all-day outdoor graduation ceremony: Commons A, Commons B, Commons C. Senator Shaheen might provide a congratulatory message broadcast. Administrators had actually measured Memorial Field to see whether it would be possible to maintain appropriate social distancing. Board members thanked Superintendent Bass and the District team for their hard work trying to plan this.

Superintendent Bass noted that regarding the issue of grading, he wanted to make sure juniors were protected. To this end, he had formed an ad hoc committee of himself, seven students, two administrators and three teachers. No parents, Board members, or building Principals were involved. The seven students were also in the seminar he has been running, with output he termed mindboggling.

Superintendent Bass introduced the question of the 8th grade trip to Washington, DC, which he will discuss later in the agenda.

Lastly, he noted there were a number of hires for the Board to consider at this meeting. He noted that certifications were being checked: whether a teacher was certified now and would be certified as of July 1. Normally this must be done by June 30: a teacher is either certified, or Alt 1, 2, 3, 4 (temporary certification). He noted that this is the responsibility of Superintendent and no one else. He stated that everyone who works for District at this time in a position requiring certification is certified and will be certified as of July 1.

Agenda Item 5. Public Comment– agenda items only. Ms. Patterson reviewed the relevant policy and gave guidance about input.

CHS student Katelyn Levesque commented that she gained confidence by attending CRTC.

There was no further comment.

Agenda Item 6. Personnel

Human Resources Director Larry Prince presented several professional leaves of absence: Gabe Cohen, Rob Fogg, Sara Hans, Clint Klose, Carol McCarthy, Michelle Mulligan, Laura-Beth Ulwick.

Ms. Higgins left the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

The Board voted 8-0 by roll call (Jennifer Patterson, Gina Cannon, Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, David Parker voted aye to approve the professional leaves of absence as presented (motioned by Ms. Cannon, seconded by Mr. Croteau).

Mr. Prince presented four administrator nominations.

Kaileen Chilauskas, Assistant Principal, Concord High School, \$113,345, step II. Kaileen replaces Tom Crumrine (step III = \$118,068) – transfer to CEA. Budgeted at \$118,068

Laura-Beth Ulwick, Assistant Principal Student Services, Abbot-Downing School, \$110,762, step II, M+30/CAGS, one year only. Laura-Beth is requesting a leave of absence from her teacher position to continue in this role. Budgeted at \$113,996

Nancy Pender, Assistant Principal Student Services, Broken Ground School, \$111,425, step III, M+30. Nancy is withdrawing her retirement request to continue in this position. Budgeted at \$113,996

Carol McCarthy, Assistant Principal Student Services, Christa McAuliffe School, \$111,425, step III, M+30, one year only. Carol is requesting a leave of absence from her teacher position to continue in this role. Budgeted at \$113,996

The Board voted 8-0 by roll call (Jennifer Patterson, Gina Cannon, Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, David Parker voted aye) to approve the administrator nomination as presented (motioned by Mr. Croteau, seconded by Mr. Crush).

Mr. Prince presented a number of current teacher nominations.

Gabriel Cohen, Performing Arts Coordinator, Concord High School, \$17,661, 20% of M+30-14, one year only. Gabe currently holds this position and is requesting a 20% leave of absence from his full-time Music Teacher position at Concord High School to continue in this assignment. Gabe has been employed as a teacher with Concord School District since 2009. Budgeted at \$11,957

A. Brin Cowette, Music Teacher, Concord High School, \$12,605, 20% of B-8, one year only. Brin is a full-time Music Teacher at Concord High School, 20% of which is one-year-only. She will continue in this position for 2020-2021. She has been employed as a teacher with Concord School District since 2015. She is replacing Gabriel Cohen (20% of M+30-14=\$17,661) – LOA. Budgeted at \$17,661

P. Clint Klose, Theatre Arts Teacher, Concord Regional Technical Center, \$77,687, B-13, one year only. Clint currently holds this position and is requesting a leave of absence from his full-time Music Teacher position at Beaver Meadow School to continue in this assignment. He has been employed as a teacher with Concord School District since 1991. Funded 67% Federal Funds plus. Budgeted 33% at \$19,729

Melissa Louf, ELL Teacher, Concord High School, \$55,285, B-5. Melissa is currently on an 80% ELL Teacher contract at Concord High School. She has been employed as a teacher with Concord School District since 2017. She replaces Natasha Berlin (M+30-14 = \$88,304) – transfer. Budgeted at \$88,304

Heidi Vibert, Special Education Teacher, Abbot-Downing School, \$57,220, M-4, one year only. Heidi currently holds this position one-year-only. Heidi has been employed with Concord School District since 2018. Heidi replaces Laura-Beth Ulwick (M+30-14 = \$88,304) – LOA from CEA to accept CAA position one-year-only. Budgeted at \$88,304

Robert Fogg, Music Teacher, Beaver Meadow School, \$68,196, B-10, one year only. Rob currently holds this position and is once again requesting a leave of absence from his 40% Music Teacher position at Christa McAuliffe School to accept this assignment. Rob has been employed as a teacher with Concord School District since 2017. Rob replaces P. Clint Klose (B-13 = \$77,687) – LOA. Budgeted at \$77,687

Mary Palm, School Nurse, Beaver Meadow School, \$63,672, BSN-12. Mary is currently a School Nurse at Concord High School. She has been employed as a nurse with Concord School District since 1999. She replaces Susan Dabuliewicz (RN-12 = \$62,175) – retirement. Budgeted at \$51,292

Michelle Pratte, Classroom Teacher, Beaver Meadow School, \$47,548, B-2. Michelle held this position one-year-only in 2019-2020. Michelle has been employed as a teacher with Concord School District since 2019. New Position. Budgeted at \$59,784

Robert Couturier, Music Teacher, Christa McAuliffe School, \$31,489, 40% of M-12, one year only. Robert held this position one-year-only in 2019-2020. He has been employed as a teacher with Concord School District since 2019. He replaces Robert Fogg (40% of B-10 = \$27,278) – LOA. Budgeted at \$27,278

Matthew Finney, Physical Education Teacher, Mill Brook School, \$77,687, B-13. Matthew replaces Kayla Chase (B-4 = 52,721) – resignation. He has been employed as a teacher with Concord School District since 1997. Budgeted at \$52,721

Jennine LaChapelle, Hearing Teacher, District, \$35,322, 40% of M+30-14. Jennine is currently on a 60% Teacher of Deaf & Hard of Hearing contract with Concord School

District. Jennine has been employed as a teacher with Concord School District since 2008. 20% Federal Funds plus. Budgeted 20% at \$17,661

Michelle Mulligan, Kindergarten Enrichment Teacher, Elementary, \$77,687, B-13, one year only. Michelle currently holds this position and is requesting a leave of absence from her Classroom Teacher position at Beaver Meadow School to continue in this assignment. She has been employed as a teacher with Concord School District since 1994. Budgeted at \$59,784.

Mr. Prince presented a number of new teacher nominations.

Jill St. Laurent, School Counselor, Concord High School, \$85,605, M-14. Jill replaces Rebecca Schaefer (M+30-14=\$88,304) – retirement. Budgeted at \$59,784

Jessica Heath, Classroom Teacher, Christa McAuliffe School, \$44,984, B-1. New Position. Budgeted at \$59,784

Timothy LaTorra, Physical Education Teacher, Christa McAuliffe School, \$85,605, M-14. Tim replaces Lisa Ham (B-13=\$77,687) – retirement. Budgeted at \$59,784

Taylor McArdle, Classroom Teacher, Mill Brook School, \$54,611, M-3. Taylor replaces Susan Phillips (B-13=\$77,687) – retirement. Budgeted at \$59,784

Amanda Black-Ingersoll, Special Education Teacher, Concord High School, \$44,984. B-1. Amanda replaces Meagan Comstock (M-6=\$62,348) – resignation. Budgeted at \$62,348

Joshua Harwood, Business Teacher, Concord High School, \$57,310, M+30-3. Joshua replaces William Crowley (M-14=\$85,605) – retirement. Budgeted at \$59,784

Meghan Williamson, Teacher, Beaver Meadow School, \$70,085, M-9. Meghan replaces James Pike (B-13=\$77,687) – retirement. Budgeted at \$77,687

Aizlyn Alfonso, Classroom Teacher, Mill Brook School, \$44,984, B-1. Aizlyn replaces Heather Silveira (M-7=\$64,957) – transfer. Budgeted at \$59,784

Liza Poinier asked if Michael Worsley had been brought in to increase diversity in hiring; Superintendent Bass noted that he had not had a role in hiring this year.

The Board voted 8-0 by roll call (Jennifer Patterson, Gina Cannon, Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, David Parker voted aye) to approve the new teacher nominations as presented (motioned by Mr. Richards, seconded by Mr. Croteau).

Mr. Prince asked the Board to vote authorize the administration to hire staff over the summer (from now through August), subject to Board confirm of those hires. This approval has typically been granted at this time of year. Mr. Crush asked whether vacancies this spring were similar to other years; Mr. Prince replied that the numbers were the same. Mr. Parker asked if there were demographic trends with regard to hiring. Mr. Prince said the candidate pool had more experienced teachers at this point. Superintendent Bass said he was confident most positions would be filled by the June meeting.

Ms. Cannon reminded the administration that during the Board's vote on the budget there was discussion whether to hold off on hiring some of the newly-created positions because of the economic impact of Covid-19 and the anticipated arrival of a new Superintendent. Superintendent Bass expressed caution about doing this, saying it would be very difficult to find highly qualified candidates in July, August or September. Ms. Patterson asked if there was further clarity on the three new positions that would be advertised.

Superintendent Bass listed a half-time social worker position at CMS; special education teacher at RMS; and half-time school psychologist at ADS. He said he deferred to Principals when he could about the need for new positions, which have been advertised. He said he would put the school at risk if he did not fill the positions, and if the Board told him to advertise for these positions in June, he would have trouble filling them.

Mr. Parker said he had concerns about hiring additional staff at this time. Mr. Crush asked Superintendent Bass if he was uncomfortable waiting to fill the positions, as they represented needs expressed by the Principals. He reminded the Board to trust District leadership if it suggested students would be at risk by not filling certain positions.

Ms. Patterson suggested separating out the authority to hire over the summer from whether to hire the three new positions. Mr. Parker said these positions were added after great scrutiny by the public and that he was just raising the question. In response to a question from Mr. Croteau, Ms. Patterson agreed that it was appropriate to raise the question given the discussion during the budget approval meeting. She reminded the Board that these three new positions were included in the "Option A" budget, which was the one approved by the Board. She said that additional relief to the taxpayers, beyond the reduced expenditures in the approved budget, would be considered in a June meeting and again in October, separate from the question of whether to fill these positions. Mr. Croteau commented that he also recalled that the referenced positions were in the budget. Mr. Richards noted his recollection was that the three positions were added back during the budget process, essentially as contingency positions. Mr. Dunn pulled up the slides from the budget meeting and confirmed that the three positions were part of the "Option A" budget as proposed by administrators, and as approved by the Board.

After further discussion, Mr. Crush made a motion to allow the administration to hire the three new positions referenced above, consistent with hiring process for all other positions.

The Board voted 6-2 by roll call (Jennifer Patterson, Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith voted aye; Ms. Cannon and Mr. Parker voted nay; Ms. Higgins had left the meeting) to allow the administration to hire the three new positions referenced above consistent with hiring process for all other positions (motioned by Mr. Crush, seconded by Ms. Poinier).

Mr. Crush made a motion to authorize the administration to hire over the summer months, subject to confirmation by the Board after the fact.

The Board voted 8-0 by roll call (Jennifer Patterson, Gina Cannon, Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, David Parker voted aye; Ms. Higgins had left the meeting) to authorize the administration to hire

over the summer months, subject to confirmation by the Board after the fact (motioned by Mr. Crush, seconded by Mr. Croteau).

Agenda Item 7. Update on Superintendent search

Ms. Patterson presented an update on the history of the Superintendent search, noting that the Board was still committed to a full process of public involvement in this stage of the search. Mr. Croteau added that the Board intended to include the public in its discussions once it could be assured that the Board had candidate(s) to move forward, and that he hoped to do that in the coming week. He stated that a non-public meeting was scheduled. And the Board discussed options for public involvement in the remainder of the process.

Agenda Item 8. Negotiations Committee

Committee chair Chuck Crush announced that the committee had met on April 23 to discuss contractual issues. As all negotiations are non-public, no further information was provided.

Agenda Item 9. Eighth-Grade Washington, DC trip

Superintendent Bass noted approximately 85 eighth-grade students had signed up to go on the (non-school-sponsored) trip to Washington DC, which had been cancelled by the company due to COVID19. He explained that most parents had been given a choice between a \$250 reimbursement, or a voucher good for two years, to September 2022. He had talked with an attorney, the Attorney General's office, and the District's insurance company, but the tour company was steadfast that its position was the same for all tours across the country. He said that parents thought this is unfair; one parent suggested that the District could buy the vouchers from the eighth-grade parents and sell them to seventh-grade parents for next year's trip, who would not be able to purchase their vouchers from the company but only from the District. Mr. Dunn noted that the District could make this happen, logistically. Board members expressed concern about this plan, including the fact that it would tie the District to using the same company again next year despite concern about its business practices. Ms. Cannon asked if extra expenses above the voucher amount would be paid by parents. Mr. Richards noted that this plan would not be without risk. He said this was not a school-sponsored trip; if the cost went down next year, which parents would pay more and which less? Mr. Parker asked whether some families were willing to forego the cost. Superintendent Bass suggested some families had insurance to cover the loss; if they got all their costs covered, those receiving only \$250 might come back to the District for the rest. Ms. Cannon asked if the Board was legally allowed to act on this issue with taxpayer money. Mr. Dunn suggested that, if the event went from a non-school-sponsored event to a school-sponsored event, the liability would be covered by Primex. Mr. Croteau said if this became a school-sponsored trip, every student would have a right to go; including supplying full-time aides if needed. With that in mind, he suggested this

continue to be a non-school-sponsored event. Superintendent Bass said initially he wanted the seventh-grade parents to buy the vouchers directly from the eighth-grade parents. Mr. Parker suggested providing information about competitors going forward. In response to a question from Mr. Richards, Mr. Dunn said there was no fund parents could turn to. Ms. Patterson said she was sympathetic to the parents' plight but felt it would not be wise for the Board to intervene in this matter using taxpayer funds. Ms. Cannon suggested that the vouchers could be sold on eBay.

Agenda Item 10. Proposed calendar of meetings

Superintendent Bass discussed the proposed Board calendars for May and June, highlighting graduation. Several additional Superintendent search meetings would also be scheduled.

Agenda Item 11. Public comment

Concord resident Leah Willingham let the Board know that she was leaving the *Concord Monitor* on May 15; moving to Jackson MS to take an Associated Press "Report for America" position. She thanked staff and the Board for her interactions with all of them, and said her time reporting on the District had been challenging and rewarding. Ms. Patterson and other Board members thanked and congratulated her.

Concord resident and parent Beth Richards said she appreciated that the discussion on competency-based grading would be led by students. She suggested that several comments at parent coffees for students transitioning into the freshman year indicated they might have good perspectives as well.

There was no further public comment.

Agenda Item 12. Adjournment

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

The Board adjourned at 10:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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