

Concord School District
Board of Education
Regular monthly meeting
July 6, 2020

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

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

Agenda Item 1. Call to Order

Board President Jennifer Patterson called the meeting to order at 7:00 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 hold 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: 678 433 53#, 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). Any votes taken would be by roll call. The following Board members noted that they were present 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.

Interim Superintendent Kathleen Murphy, Business Administrator Jack Dunn, Assistant Superintendent Donna Palley, Director of Human Resources Larry Prince and Director of Facilities Matt Cashman were also present.

Agenda Item 2. Approval of Agenda

Tom Croteau made a motion to approve the agenda.

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 (motioned by Ms. Cannon, seconded by Mr. Crush).

Agenda Item 3. Approval of Board minutes

Ms. Patterson briefly reviewed the minutes of the Board meeting on June 1 and Special Board meetings on June 10, June 11, June 25, and June 29.

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 June 1 and Special Board meetings on June 10, June 11, June 25, and June 29 (moved by Ms. Higgins, seconded by Mr. Croteau).

Agenda Item 4. Recognitions/Reports

Superintendent Murphy discussed the preliminary report on plans to return to school in the fall, noting that families were anxious to know what the administration's plans were. The focus was how to bring students back to school in a safe way. Very preliminary

information from the DOE had been received, which had then gone to the Governor's office. She noted that NH Department of Public Health had terrific resources, along with CDC regulations about safety, to determine the best route if/when the students came back to school. Assistant Superintendent Donna Palley described the steps taken thus far, and the bases by which decisions would be made. She noted that the administration was relying on feedback from stakeholders; feedback and guidance from Governor's office; best practices from experts and own experience. A number of groups had been formed to analyze return-to-school, including teaching and learning (with 9 sub-groups, which had created surveys for parents and staff); social-emotional needs; technology and infrastructure; physical well-being (buses, cleaning, playground, etc.). With documents produced by those groups in hand, the plan was broken down by elementary, middle, and high school levels in three models: in-person, remote, and hybrid. She noted that an update to the plan would come before the Instructional Committee in July, with a more defined plan presented for a vote at the August Board meeting.

The draft document included information about the District's priorities: emotional/social, academic, and financial stability. The study groups were looking at physical distancing in classrooms; limiting group size; allowing only minimal movement within buildings; limitations on large group gatherings; and potentially restricting buildings, with no non-essential visitors. Remote and in-person instruction might need to occur at the same time. There was also information from families and staff about who may not be able to participate in person. They were examining models for transporting students to school. They were also looking at employee contracts; ensuring strong Intern support; aligning with other Districts (CRTC and other partnerships). She noted that many teachers were also parents; concerns about families of siblings who attend different schools were noted. The group focusing on curriculum was analyzing whether to limit to some extent what would be taught. A robust communications plan, including translators, was being developed. Building operations issues were being closely examined. Ms. Palley said the administration was being as comprehensive as possible and that the next few weeks were critical at the "virtual table." She also noted that much of this work was being shared with curriculum directors and Assistant Superintendents in other districts. She said that about 60 staff members were participating in this critical project.

Mr. Croteau commented that communication - how information would be conveyed to the school community such that everyone was on board and had had opportunities to provide input and knew what to expect.

Superintendent Murphy noted the plan would be ready by the middle of July for discussion by the Instructional Committee and would be presented at the August 3 Board meeting for the Board's approval. She would be meeting with City officials in the next week. The plan would be presented in a remote setting that would give parents the opportunity to ask questions and give input. She would be sending letters from her office until it was time to go public with the plan, as she did not want to wait until August to let parents know that work was in development.

Chuck Crush said the Governor's office indicated it was up to Districts to make and present their own plan to their School Boards. Ms. Palley said they hoped for more detailed guidance from NH DHHS (for example, very detailed information had been issued re summer camps, etc.). She noted the administration was taking guidance from State Epidemiologist Dr. Benjamin Chan.

Mr. Crush recommended consulting with an infectious disease physician specializing in epidemiology. This physician could guide the District regarding students who could not physically distance or could not wear a mask. He said the sooner information got out to those parents the better, as the District needed to not discriminate against any population.

Mr. Richards suggested that the communication plan would need to be strong and use multiple channels, as it was critical for parents to have opportunities for input in July (before the August 3 meeting). He felt it was important to include what had been well done or not well done from the spring's remote learning. Ms. Palley noted that the parent survey was still available.

Superintendent Murphy provided an update on initial steps to address discrimination in the District, summarizing the two initial meetings as positive. Between 22 and 27 participants attended each session, including parents, students, teachers, administrators, invited School Board members, and outside experts. Recommendations included examining Board policies and procedures (sexual harassment, bullying and others) through an equity lens. Title IX protections needed to be reflected in policy; complaint procedure was necessary; it was critical to know who was in charge of the process and how to file a complaint. The groups indicated that professional development, both short-term and long-term, was critical, with implicit biases and "micro aggressions" necessary discussions. As schools are a microcosm of society, sharing training for parents and community members was considered. A needs assessment was suggested, as discrimination is not just racial but also includes gender, ethnic, religious discrimination. The groups recommended starting in the young grades to teach "cultural competencies." There was a suggestion that "New American" families' voices were not being heard. She said a venue to communicate with those families was needed. Superintendent Murphy noted that, as always, a communication plan was really important. The groups' intent was to create actionable items in a plan and strategy going forward. A number of actions would be focused on each year, with measurable metrics, and designees assigned responsibility. The group also suggested a review of discipline strategies, with the suggestion to consider "restorative justice." Disciplinary policies should be looked at with an eye to national and statewide data. At the second meeting, some recommendations from the first meeting were repeated. This group suggested forming a long-standing steering committee comprised of students, staff and parents, possibly including facilitators for some of the work. They also suggested examining the role of the School Resource Officer (SRO) in schools, and whether this was a necessary position. The group also felt anti-discrimination initiatives should be on the School Board agenda each month. Superintendent Murphy said one more meeting of this very large "advisory committee" was planned, to make sure all voices were heard, after which a structure would be created for next steps.

Ms. Patterson said these were difficult conversations, some pieces of which could be public, but some not due to the sensitivity of stories.

David Parker said he attended both meetings, noting that students wanted to be engaged at an adult level. He favored consideration of a restorative justice model to address student discipline, noting that in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions and expulsions might be imposed without questions, possibly based on an administrator's implicit bias at times. On the other hand, these options were not necessarily wrong in certain cases, and he did not want disruptive actions to interfere with learning. He asked why the District would retain discipline systems that were not particularly effective, suggesting that restorative justice cuts across boundaries of special education, cultural differences, etc. He noted that overhauling the disciplinary structure was a monumental task but said such an important piece of education was cultural and civic education. He said the Board was trying hard to be, if not leaders in this change, at least healthy facilitators in any ongoing discussion.

Mr. Richards commented that last summer, the Board intended to examine disciplinary procedures regarding suspensions, etc. He suggested placing this on a Communications & Policy Committee meeting agenda. Ms. Patterson noted that Title IX Coordinator Karen Fischer-Anderson was examining data on student discipline and asked for her initial thoughts on how she was going to approach that task.

Mr. Crush asked that the administration be mindful of inadvertently creating a culture of discrimination within the return-to-school plan.

Ms. Cannon noted that Ms. Fischer-Anderson was examining unintentional bias in data, suggesting the administration rely on her expertise to identify where this might happen.

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

Concord resident Tina Philibotte said she felt the conversation was thoughtful, difficult and deliberate.

Concord resident and parent Sarah Robinson thanked the Board for taking anti-discrimination work seriously. She said that hiring more black, indigenous or other people of color would require a nurturing and supportive culture before those staff even arrived. She suggested the Concord community was ready and willing to do the work – the mental and emotional and physical labor work. She suggested the administration reach out to “Showing Up for Racial Justice,” a group engaged in “undoing white supremacist structures.” The group’s email is concordnhsurj@gmail.com

RMS art teacher Somayeh Sashi said she appreciated supportive comments from Board members.

Concord resident and parent Melissa Hinebauch thanked the Board and administration for addressing all the ways people are discriminated against and made more vulnerable because of their particular status. She called for continued action and recognized efforts the

District was starting to make, noting that she could provide resources and accountability on this issue.

Agenda Item 6. Personnel

Note: this is for the record.

Kathleen Murphy, Interim Superintendent of Schools, Concord School District, \$155,000, one year only

Education: University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH CAGS Administration, 1994; Rivier College, Nashua, NH M.S. Educational Administration, 1976; Plymouth State College, Plymouth, NH, B.S. Education, 1971

Certification: Experienced Educator Certificate, exp. 06/30/22, Superintendent, Principal

Experience: Superintendent, 2011-present – Hampton School District, Hampton, NH; Commissioner for MIC3, 2014-present (Military Interstate Children’s Compact Commission); Director Division of Instruction, 2008-2011 – New Hampshire Department of Education, Concord, NH; Superintendent of Schools, 2003-2008 – Newmarket School District, Newmarket, NH; Instructional Supervisor, 2002-2003 – Nashua School District, Nashua, NH; Assistant Superintendent, 1996-2002 – Derry Cooperative School District, Derry, NH; School Principal, 1984-1996 – West Running Brook Middle School, Derry, NH, Gilbert H. Hood Middle School, Derry, NH, Grinnell Elementary School, Derry, NH, Candia Moore School, Candia, NH; Classroom Teacher, 1971-1984 – Grinnell Elementary School Classroom Teacher. Kathleen replaces Franklyn Bass, Ph.D.

Human Resources Director Larry Prince presented one professional leave of absence.

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

Mr. Prince presented one administrator confirmation.

Shawn White, Director of Special Education, Rundlett Middle School, \$113,670, step II, M+30/CAGS. *Certification:* Experienced Educator Certificate, exp. 06/30/22: Principal, Special Education Administrator, General Special Education, Specific Learning Disabilities. Shawn replaces Kerry Finnegan (step III, M+30/CAGS = \$118,067) – transfer. Budgeted at \$118,067

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

Mr. Prince presented several confirmations of existing staff.

Donna Hillyer, Special Education Teacher, Concord High School, \$47,548, B-2, one year only. *Certification:* Educational Intern License – Alternative 4, exp. 06/30/22. Donna held a one-year-only Special Education teacher position at Concord High School for the 2019-2020

school year. Donna has been employed with Concord School District since 2013. Donna replaces Lauren Orlen (M+30-14 = \$88,304) – LOA. Budgeted at \$88,304

Lauren Orlen, School Counselor, Concord High School, \$88,304, M+30-14, one year only. *Certification:* Experienced Educator, exp. 06/30/23, General Special Education; Statement of Eligibility, effective 05/13/2020. Lauren is requesting a leave of absence from her full-time Special Education teacher position to accept this assignment. Lauren has been employed as a teacher with Concord School District since 2006. Lauren replaces Jocelyn Jerry-Wolcott (M-14 = \$85,605) – retirement. Budgeted at \$59,784

Kathryn Todd, Speech-Language Pathologist, Concord High School, \$23,616, 30% of M-12, one year only. *License:* State of NH Licensing, exp. 12/31/2021, Speech-Language Pathologist. Kathryn is currently in this position as a one-year-only assignment. This is in addition to Kathryn's 50% Speech-Language Pathologist position at Concord High School. Kathryn has been employed as a speech-language pathologist with Concord School District since 2012. Kathryn replaces Sara Hans (30% of M-14 = \$26,491) – LOA. Budgeted at \$26,491

Mr. Prince presented a number of new teacher confirmations.

Magalie Lawrence, French Teacher, Concord High School, \$8,997, 20% of B-1. *Certification:* Pursuing. New from reallocation. Budgeted at \$17,121

Susan Gorham, School Nurse, District, \$63,672, BSN-12. *License:* Registered Nurse, exp. 01/18/22. New position. Budgeted at \$51,292

Christy Ayer, School Psychologist, Elementary, \$85,605, M-14. *Certification:* Experienced Educator Certificate, exp. 06/30/22, School Psychologist. Christy replaces Tara Spencer (M+30-14 = \$88,304) – transfer. Budgeted at \$88,304

Christine Roman, Digital Learning Specialist, Abbot-Downing School, \$68,196, B-10. *Certification:* Experienced Educator Certificate, exp. 06/30/21, Digital Learning Specialist, Elementary Education, K-8. Christine replaces Alison Casco (M+30-14 = \$88,304) – transfer. Budgeted at \$88,304

Alicia Frank, School Psychologist, Broken Ground School/Mill Brook School, \$88,304, M+30-14. *Certification:* Experienced Educator Certificate, exp. 06/30/23. School Psychologist. Alicia replaces Melissa Pazdon (M+30-13 = \$84,885) – transfer. Budgeted at \$84,885

Julie Britton, Special Education Teacher, Rundlett Middle School, \$55,285, B-5, one year only. *Certification:* Experienced Educator Certificate, exp. 06/30/21, General Special Education. New Position. Budgeted at \$59,784

The Board voted 9-0 by roll call (Jennifer Patterson, Gina Cannon, Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Barb Higgins, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, David Parker voted aye) to confirm the existing and new teacher hires as presented (motioned by Ms. Higgins, seconded by Ms. Smith).

Ms. Patterson moved that the Board approve the hiring of Dr. Bass to teach an independent study from mid-July to mid-November. Mr. Richards asked how any other student could

participate in this class, since this would be paid out of public funds. CHS Principal Mike Reardon noted that guidance counselors would be involved in registering students for the class, and additional students could be recruited up to the maximum class size.

The Board voted 9-0 by roll call (Jennifer Patterson, Gina Cannon, Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Barb Higgins, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, David Parker voted aye) to hire Frank Bass as a teacher of two independent studies for a total payment of \$3,000 (motioned by Ms. Patterson, seconded by Ms. Higgins).

Agenda Item 7. Negotiations

Mr. Crush reported that the Negotiations Committee met on June 9 and recommended approval of the CEAA collective bargaining agreement. Note: the Board voted on June 11 to approve the contract. Mr. Prince noted that a demand letter to negotiate had been received from the CEA.

Agenda Item 8. Capital Facilities/Finance

Mr. Richards reported that the two committees met jointly on June 11 to discuss summer projects, whether to encumber a significant portion of the unreserved fund balance from the FY20 budget above the \$2.1 million needed for the FY21 budget [Note: this was voted in the affirmative at a Special Board meeting on June 25], and whether to reprioritize funding left over from bond proceeds that had been earmarked for the steam-to-gas conversion project and to use the balance of funds instead for site improvements to Concord High School, Beaver Meadow School, Central Office and Mill Brook School.

Mr. Dunn noted that all activities related to the trust funds were audited annually and could be examined by the public. He also noted two grants: the CARES ACT, part of Title I, of \$953,000 in total (individual private schools were entitled to get a portion of that). 100% funded. From a FEMA grant: 75% paid by FEMA, 25% paid by District – restrictions related to Covid-19 (PPE, cleaning, etc.). There is no cap on the amount of money that had been announced at that point.

Mr. Parker observed that a large percentage of the budget was staffing. He recognized the caliber of incoming staff and faculty and said it cost the taxpayers more but was worth it.

Mr. Richards made a motion to reprioritize funding left over from the Feb. 15, 2017 bond proceeds that had been earmarked for the steam-to-gas conversion project (\$9 million had been bonded; the project came in about \$1.1 million under budget) and to use the balance of funds instead for site improvements to Concord High School, Beaver Meadow School, Central Office and Mill Brook School. Mr. Richards clarified that bonding laws required the funds be used on like projects that would have a 20-year life span. He read the following:

Move that the School Board reprioritize up to \$1.1 million in savings from bond funds remaining from the \$9 million steam-to-gas project originally voted on February 15,

2017 to do some or all of the following additions and/or replacements for projects with a lifespan of 20+ years:

- Replace Concord High School entrance, walkways, and site work
- Replace Concord High School stair treads and landings
- Replace Beaver Meadow sidewalk and pick-up lane
- Replace White Farm roof
- Add additional parking to Mill Brook School
- Replace Central Office parking lot and retaining wall

The Board voted 9-0 by roll call ((Jennifer Patterson, Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, Ms. Cannon, Ms. Higgins, and Mr. Parker voted aye) to recommend that the full Board reprioritize up to \$1.1 million in funding left over from bond proceeds dating from 2017 that had been earmarked for the steam-to-gas conversion project and to use the balance of funds instead for site improvements to Concord High School, Beaver Meadow School, Central Office and Mill Brook School as presented (motioned by Mr. Richards, seconded by Mr. Croteau).

Agenda Item 9. Other Business

Superintendent Murphy proposed securing the services of a communication consultant to assist her with relaying messages to the public, focusing on the District's response to Title IX sexual harassment, the return-to-school plan, and equity/anti-discrimination issues. She said she wanted to be consistent and clear to the public. The contract would be a limited-term (35 hours) at a cost of \$10,000, paid on an hourly basis. After researching consultants with the required experience, she recommended Karen Schwartzman.

Mr. Croteau said it was important to have a consistent voice. Mr. Parker asked for clarification about who that person would be speaking for, as Board members were elected officials voted to speak their opinions and represent the public. Superintendent Murphy concurred with Mr. Parker that communication must be transparent; the consultant would not be speaking for the Board but would develop communication on behalf of the administration. Mr. Parker would not "lose his voice" over these matters. Ms. Patterson reiterated that consultant services would not take away from any Board member voice. Mr. Richards commented that \$10,000 was a sizeable amount; he wanted assurance about deliverables. Superintendent Murphy said she would get exact deliverables to the Board. Ms. Poinier said she felt this was an important service, noting that the consultant would not speak for any administrator or Board member, but would develop a communications plan for the whole District. She also noted that Board members' roles were not to speak for the District. Mr. Parker clarified that if he voted in favor of this consultant, it would be that this consultant would speak for the District, not the Board.

The Board voted 6-3 by roll call (Jennifer Patterson, Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, voted aye; Ms. Cannon, Ms. Higgins,

Mr. Parker voted no) to approve the hiring of a communications consultant for 35 hours at a cost of \$10,000 (motioned by Ms. Patterson, seconded by Ms. Poinier).

Agenda Item 10. Proposed calendar of meetings

The proposed Board calendars for July and August were discussed, including meetings of the Instructional Committee on July 22, of the Communications & Policy Committee on July 29, and of the Negotiations Committee on July 27 and in August.

Agenda Item 11. Public comment on any topic

There was no public comment.

Agenda Item 12. Adjournment

The Board voted 9-0 to adjourn (motioned by Mr. Croteau, seconded by Ms. Higgins).

The Board adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barb Higgins, *Secretary*
Linden Jackett, *Recorder*