

Concord School District
Board of Education
Special Board meeting
August 17, 2020

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

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

Agenda Item 1. Call to Order

Board President Jennifer Patterson called the meeting to order at 6:00 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. The District is actively working on a plan to resume in-person meetings, and anticipates doing so before students start back at school. A space large enough to socially distance and allow members of the public to attend is being sought. 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: 494 739 791#, 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 anyone 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, David Parker, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Jennifer Patterson, Danielle Smith. Student representative Alice Richards was also present.

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

Agenda Item 2. Approval of Agenda

Ms. Patterson briefly reviewed the agenda, noting that Board members cannot have any conversation with one another except during a properly noticed public meeting. This meeting, therefore, was their opportunity to talk with one another. She noted that the Board and administrators were doing their best to plan for school during a pandemic. It was not the Board's intention to revisit decisions made at the August 6 meeting, but they wanted to further discuss several specific issues with the expertise of District administrators. She said the Board would take public comment and vote on each proposal. She noted that when the Board took public comment, it did not plan on responding or engaging with members of the public. She said that, given the magnitude of the issues, the Board would endeavor to hear each person, with a 5-minute limit which would be tracked. She noted that Board members did not have conversation among themselves until they had heard all public comment. Lastly, she noted that, before the public comment period, Board member Danielle Smith would summarize the substantial number of email comments received.

Barb Higgins joined the meeting.

Mr. Crush asked whether teacher/staff comment on working remotely would be part of the discussion and suggested that did need to be addressed. Ms. Patterson suggested that

would depend on what criteria Superintendent Murphy presented, upon which the Board could make decisions.

Ms. Higgins 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. Higgins, seconded by Mr. Croteau).

Agenda Item 3. Approval of Board minutes

Ms. Patterson briefly reviewed the minutes of the Board meeting on July 6 and the Special Board meeting on July 27.

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 July 6 and the Special Board meeting on July 27 (moved by Ms. Higgins, seconded by Mr. Crush).

Agenda Item 4. Proposed calendar of meetings

The proposed Board calendars for August and September were discussed, including an information session offered to potential Board candidates. The filing period to run for a seat on the Board was from September 2 to September 11. Mr. Richards described the three seats up for election, one from each "District." Superintendent Murphy suggested another Instructional committee meeting before September 23.

Agenda Item 5. Update on steps to address discrimination/racism.

Superintendent Murphy noted that this group had its third meeting on August 13, at which it began work on its action plan. Several recommendations from the second meeting were included, and the action plan was expanded with several new recommendations. The group discussed the need for an organizational structure; that a smaller steering committee and subgroups be established. Several people expressed a need to keep people accountable for this work. Superintendent Murphy said a subgroup would seek a facilitator who could focus on the group's vision and mission and training opportunities; candidates could include Carsey Policy Institute, NH Listens, or Great Schools. She noted that money tied to federal grants, especially Title IV, could be used as it related to training and developing a District plan. Several subcommittees were suggested, including school administrators and educators with students; community concerns; policy work using an "equity lens;" curriculum. She said she met last week with a dozen very forthright students for a conversation about racial inequities. She thanked Board student representative Alice Richards, who helped contact students for this meeting.

Ms. Richards reported that on August 13, nine students met with Superintendent Murphy, Principal Reardon, and Anna-Marie DiPasquale to express and discuss concerns about racism and other forms of discrimination in the District. Prior to this meeting, some of those students met with NH Commissioner of Education Frank Edelblut to bring related demands. These included: allocate funds for mandatory, prolonged training for all NH public school administrators and staff that explores diversity, intercultural competency, and implicit racial bias training; “decolonize” the state’s curriculum standards, prioritizing Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) voices and ensuring an accurate and complete history of oppression and systemic racism in the U.S. is taught, beginning in elementary school; track and annually publish transparent data on racial and ethnic disparities in rates of graduation, suspension, referrals to law enforcement, and involvement in honors and advanced placement courses; develop a program with the explicit goal of recruiting more staff of color to teach in NH public schools; reform ELL programs, placing an emphasis on hiring more interpreters and encouraging rather than punishing students speaking a second language; develop a comprehensive guide for school districts on restorative justice practices, encouraging schools to move away from punitive suspensions and expulsions.

In the meeting with District administrators, intelligent and thoughtful ideas were expressed to help make clear that serious issues in our district were rooted in racism. Other topics included the presence of a School Resource Office (SRO) at CHS and the need to create an effective plan to handle insensitive/offensive comments and actions in a way that teaches and disciplines the student at fault. Those present reflected on actions that could be taken immediately, starting with training for all District administrators and staff that explores diversity, intercultural competency, and implicit racial bias. Secondly, the students asked that serious curriculum reform be undertaken, starting with social studies courses at the middle and high school levels, including District guidelines that could be specifically applied/interpreted based on school level. Lastly, the students asked that the District annually publish transparent data of the past, and going forward.

Mr. Croteau asked about using Title IV funds, noting that a number of groups had come forward in the past to volunteer to help on an unpaid basis. He said he did not want to use taxpayer money if federal money could be used, or the assistance of an expert willing to donate their time. Superintendent Murphy noted that she had used Title IV funds in another district for racial equity work.

She also said that specific data for Concord schools existed and would be reported, including race and demographics, which would be useful, enlightening, and indicate how diverse a District this is. Mr. Crush suggested including data on restraint and seclusion related to ethnic and different backgrounds. Superintendent Murphy said this was data that was reported out every year to NH DOE and was accessible on its website. She noted District particulars could be added to make the data more helpful to the Board.

Agenda Item 6. Return to school update.

Superintendent Murphy expressed concerns about incidents at the August 6 Board meeting. She acknowledged that ramifications of the pandemic were very emotional for

everyone. She recognized that remote meetings were difficult and the effort to ensure all voices were heard and respected was a very long process. She noted that inappropriate comments had been made in the chat, and several people, students and CHS alumni expressing opinions about returning to school “through an equity lens” had been interrupted. She apologized for that, stating that it was unacceptable and she was sorry it happened. She noted that it was critically important to keep in mind that the Board, administrators and other adults were role models for the next generation.

Superintendent Murphy recommended four critical elements to return to school, based on scientific data and data received from Merrimack County. Concord received a “green” rating of 1 per 100,000 identified as having Covid-10 (using a 7-day average), which allowed the District to open schools.

She noted that in June, CRTC students came back during a peak period for their end-of-year project assessments, competencies, and to receive their certifications. All safety protocols were observed; students achieved what they needed to achieve; and there were no reports of Covid-19. Three sessions of summer school were held at CHS: one totally remote, and two sessions with students on site during which safety protocols were followed with 100 students per session. Following recommendations from NHIAA, athletic teams practiced skills and drills outside, with no illnesses reported, including coaches. As she reflected on this, and with advice from Directors Steve Rothenberg and Steve Mello, and Dr. Noble, she recommended opening CRTC. Safety protocols including masks, social distancing of 6 feet, handwashing and sanitizing would be expected.

Her second recommendation, based on NHIAA guidelines, was to allow athletics and extracurricular programs at RMS and CHS to resume.

Her third recommendation was to allow the most vulnerable students to receive services required by their IEPs to come back to school, including preschoolers with IEPs. She noted the Governor’s recent Executive Order to ensure students met all goals and objectives via their IEPs. With this, she recommended English Language Learner (ELL) students also come back to school. She had attended a forum last Tuesday night at Keach Park at which 100 families gathered to hear about the proposed remote plan and listened to their concerns through interpreters. They were concerned they did not yet understand English sufficiently to teach their children in English via remote learning. She also recommended that students who are homeless and do not have a place to access services from teachers and do their remote learning come back to school.

Additionally, Superintendent Murphy recommended setting a date for an Instructional Committee meeting to consider moving toward the hybrid model over time, perhaps by October or November. She said that teachers, educational assistants and others were to return to classrooms and assigned educational spaces to deliver services to students. She understood that some staff were not able to do that because of family concerns or medical issues, and the administration was working with those. She was discussing the expectations with CEA, CEAA, and Tutors about being in their classrooms, as they needed to access resources available to them in the building, and to work with their building Principals/Assistant Principals. She suggested perhaps kindergarteners could come in to

the building, meet their teachers and be assessed, and perhaps small-group orientations could be arranged for incoming 6th and 9th graders. Mr. Cashman has secured significant amounts of personal protective equipment (PPE), and has been working with HVAC engineers to ensure air quality in the schools. She emphasized that she had read every email from parents, staff and community members.

Ms. Patterson suggested that Board members ask questions of Superintendent Murphy and other administrators, keeping the conversation focused on the proposed plan, and saving Board discussion and opinions until after the public comment period. She suggested no discussion or interruption by Board members among themselves.

Superintendent Murphy noted that the administrative team would meet weekly to consider continuing advice from Dr. Noble and the CDC about moving to the hybrid model. She said that the building Principals were planning parent forums: one for elementary level schools with similar schedules and delivery of instruction; one for the high school and one for the middle school.

In response to a question from Ms. Patterson about how she envisioned these issues being brought forward to the Board, Superintendent Murphy replied that she did not think this was a Board decision. While pedagogy, practice and delivery of instruction is what instructional professionals were hired to do, she would keep the Board informed of progress. Ms. Higgins commented that the era of the Concord School District functioning without Board knowledge were over. That transparency is a must and that while we didn't necessarily need to approve every decision but we needed to be included.

In response to a question from Mr. Croteau about how the needs of ELL, homeless, at-risk special education students would be met if their parents did not send them to school, Superintendent Murphy said that remote learning was an option for everyone and if a parent did not want their student in school, they would continue receiving services in a remote model. Some teachers would be in school and others would be remote.

Superintendent Murphy said that if parents allowed student to participate in athletics or cocurricular activities, they would not be in school all day just to do that activity.

In response to a question whether groups which begin the year in school would follow a hybrid schedule, Superintendent Murphy those who were at-risk could come in more than just the two days, based on their IEPs and what they need.

In response to a question whether CRTC would provide instruction every day, Mr. Rothenberg said that students would not attend five days a week; the goal was to get students in three times a week. He was working with nine sending schools to create customized schedules for each student, focusing on creating reasonable student workloads.

In response to a concern from Ms. Cannon whether the District had sufficient bandwidth within the District for all teachers to conduct remote learning within their buildings, Pam McLeod replied that normally, 6,500 devices in the District were online at any time. Before Ms. Cannon was on the Board, in 2016-2017, the District had invested nearly \$1.3 million in wired and wireless devices, two-thirds of which were paid for by eRate. The District had also given notice to its Internet Provider (IP) to turn up the bandwidth if needed.

Ms. Cannon asked whether all teachers had been directly contacted; how many were applying to teach remotely; what the deadline, decision, appeal process was; how many were willing to come in. Superintendent Murphy noted that all CEOPA members were back in to work, except those who were unable due to a personal medical situation or that of a family member, or childcare issues. These notices had been directed to HR Director Larry Prince. She noted that teachers would be in their classrooms, by themselves. Mr. Prince noted that before last week, the District had been accepting emails/letters, and if there was a medical issue, staff would be asked for a doctor's note. Last week, ADA and Family First CARES Act forms started to be filed; 80 to 90 staff have requested to work remotely out of approximately 380 teachers and 180 paraprofessionals.

Mr. Richards asked what actions would be taken if one of the nine sending schools (representing 30 communities) had positive cases or a spike in cases. Mr. Rothenberg said the school would defer to the NH Public Health department for protocols. He was receiving good guidance in order to make good decisions. Protocols would include how students enter/exit the building, enter/exit classrooms, or enter/exit bathrooms. He said a strong, regular communication plan was essential. Superintendent Murphy said she planned to share with the Instructional Committee an action matrix when a student is diagnosed, noting that this is within the purview of NH Public Health. Mr. Richards commented that he wanted the Board to make all its decisions based on metrics of science and data rather than anxiety and fear.

Mr. Crush asked whether CEA was supportive of the hybrid model, to which Superintendent Murphy indicated they were supportive to the extent they wanted flexibility for their teachers. In response to a further question from Mr. Crush about the number of teachers requesting leave, Mr. Prince indicated it was probably one or two at that time.

In response to another question from Mr. Crush whether, if a parent of child with an IEP chose to keep his child at home, that child's IEP goals and needs would be met, even remotely, Superintendent Murphy indicated this would have to be the case. She noted that administrators and teachers have worked hard since end of the school year to improve the delivery of remote learning, and make it more interactive. She felt the District needed to give students the option to come in and work with teacher.

Ms. Poinier asked about Chromebooks and different software packages, noting she'd like to hear more about technology planning at each school level, as well as plans for preschool. She asked for a list of non-athletic co-curricular programs. She urged the administration to communicate with parents on a regular basis.

Ms. McLeod noted that the Technology Department was ready with one-to-one devices for every student in the District (filling in with iPads for kindergarteners), and that new Chromebooks just arrived last week. Old Chromebooks had been sold to other districts. Teachers can use google meet with their students, but could now also use Zoom, with several interesting features. The District had used some CARES act funds on 12-13 new educational software applications for different grade levels. She indicated a committee of teachers across the District had selected ParentSquare as a communications tool with the

capability for District communications, teacher communications, school-wide communications.

Superintendent Murphy noted that the District will discontinue its typically developing preschool program for the year, and will just be serve preschoolers with IEPs, as required by law. She noted that schedules had been reviewed with all Principals, and these would be posted on each school's website and Facebook page. She suggested all students and staff entering the building must review a health checklist and have their temperature taken.

Danielle Smith asked if the Board decided to move to a hybrid model, if students would be transferred into another class from the one they'd been in with a "remote" teacher. Superintendent Murphy said it was inevitable that a move to a hybrid model would likely mean students would be reassigned. She recognized this would be difficult with earlier elementary grades. David Parker recognized that preschoolers and kindergarteners and first graders would have a harder time developmentally accessing computer programming and harder for them to manage that. Superintendent Murphy said a goal between now and September 8 was to conduct family technology training. She, too, was concerned about the impact on emotional, physical, mental and social growth of students at different developmental stages. She noted further discussion would take place at Instructional Committee meetings, as well as in weekly administrator and curriculum leader meetings.

Agenda Item 7. Public Comment– agenda items only.

Ms. Patterson reviewed the relevant policy and gave guidance about input. Ms. Smith presented a summary of public comment, over 100 emails. Of approximately 54 emails related to athletics, 51 were in favor of allowing the program and three were not in favor. (This did not include an online petition, which had over 700 signatures advocating for some sort of athletic season.) Most noted athletics were important for children's physical and mental health, especially as the school year would start remotely with children spending a great deal of time on computers; getting out into fresh air was important. Most made a distinction between why it was important to have sports, and starting the school year out remotely. A few comments advocating against suggested that if it was not safe to be in a classroom, students should not be doing sports. Emails about CRTC were almost completely in support of in-person instruction, indicating that cosmetology, auto mechanics, construction would be impossible to do remotely. Parents' and students' message was, "We want and choose to be here so we would fully cooperate with any safety measure you put in place." It was noted that students must apply to get into these highly-competitive programs, so the incentive to comply with safety protocols was high. Concerns about students with IEPs indicated that significant modifications were needed to improve the remote learning model. Other comments asked what data the Board would need to have to approve any plan to come back to school.

Ms. Patterson asked Mr. Dunn to assist in moderating the public comment section, reiterating that the Board wanted to hear from each person wanting to comment; a 5-

minute limit would be observed; the Board would appreciate brevity; and that it was not the Board's intention to respond to comments.

Concord resident "Melanie" said she was confused about whether school would start remotely. She was in favor of CRTC opening. She noted there was a correlation between physical activity and depression.

Concord resident and parent Michelle Beauregard has children at BMS, RMS, and CHS asked whether there was a timeline to move to the hybrid model; for more detail on the new way of teaching this session; for schedules; whether these decisions were being made at District level or at the school level. She said she needed to make decisions about what to do with her kids and fit in work.

Concord resident and parent Pamela Walsh said she appreciated how difficult this situation was for the Board, considering the lack of clear state and federal guidance. She said the country appeared to be in for a long haul, and a long-term plan was needed. She appreciated the need for criteria about moving to a hybrid model. She noted the District was losing the window for in-person learning before flu season hits, and the crossover in symptoms will be too much to keep schools open. She asked the Board how it would develop criteria if it was unwilling to use the Harvard model. She noted that school was scheduled to start in 21 days and parents had very little information to date, and that remote learning in the spring was "a disaster," with parents, teachers, students and in tears. She noted multiple recent Board meetings for which technology was not optimal, and asked how first graders who could not mute themselves were expected to cope. She said parents needed to find childcare; that this was urgent for families and children and the Board needed to be treating it more urgently.

Concord resident and parent Deb [Lahey] said that Concord was the only District going completely remote. She said students deserved the choice to participate in sports and activities.

Pittsfield resident Clayton Wood said he was excited that his daughter had been accepted into the computer program at CRTC, and had been very impressed by CRTC staff. He said not only did he want her to go there, she wanted to attend. He felt that hands-on work was a critical part of this program. He supported any effort Mr. Rothenberg was making to get students into the building and would support any on-site training.

Concord CHS senior Madison Miles said she was a member of the Concord cheerleading program, and this fall was her second year as Cheer captain. She was hoping to have a senior season and planned to continue cheering at the collegiate level. She had read the NHIAA guidelines and understood that circumstances/decision present challenges. She said the cheer team follow all safety guidelines and was willing to do all those things to ensure they can just have a season.

Boscawen resident Sheila [Soreno] spoke about her son's interest in the competitive culinary arts program at CRTC, that he wants to join the Navy and be a chef. She asked if the program was not hands-on for at least few days a week, how he would learn to be a chef and cook, and how he would be assessed. She said programs like mechanics and

multimedia would be very hard to do remotely. She asked whether a student (sophomore) would be allowed to defer for this year, or would have to reapply.

Concord resident and parent Jonathan Lax said that his stepson would be attending Bishop Brady in order to have an in-school experience. He said other parents were choosing to send their children to private schools or be homeschooled, and that he was disappointed in the Board's decision. He urged the Board to reconsider what it decided two weeks ago, and to take steps as quickly as possible to get as many students in school as possible.

Kearsarge resident "Alora" said she would be a senior at Kearsarge Regional and had participated in a CRTC program. She loved the program and felt that hands-on work was critical, as remote simply did not work as well.

Concord resident and parent David Saunders said that this District was far behind in detailed presentations for what should have been a much longer planning process. He proposed delaying the start of CRTC/preschool/IEPs etc. until mid-October and developing a plan in a safe and equitable manner for the Board's September 8 meeting. He asked which specific students were looking to utilize services, and how many IEP students would be in a class.

Concord resident and parent Rebecca McHugh noted that what people want and what needs to occur were not the same thing. She appreciated the administration taking the time to plan and would like to hope that the CSD would set parameters for parents; for example, if teaching was to be remote it should be synchronous. Teachers should be expected to be online but parents too should be expected to get their children started in the morning.

Concord student Gracie McHugh said it was important to have sports safely, and that kids who may not be the greatest students try to keep up their grades to stay in sports program.

Concord resident and CHS senior Nathan Schmitz said that the Board refused to address concerns of racism directly to the people who commented at past Board meetings. He said that silence was one of the ways people were complicit with racial discrimination. He expected Board members to lead by example and respond to people who have experienced racial discrimination at school for many years. He noted that his younger sister experienced racism on a daily basis and that people deserved answers.

Concord resident and parent Madeleine [Mineau] asked for criteria the Board would use to approve some amount of in-person learning, suggesting it had gone against the recommendations in the Harvard Plan as well as against Dr. Noble's advice. She asked the Board to reconsider offering only remote learning for the earliest grades. While she was not advocating against athletics, it was hard to understand why first graders could not learn with their teachers while allowing sports with physical contact among students. She asked the Board to find a way to allow sports and allow students in the schools.

Concord resident and Educational Assistant Chris Russell said he could not justify returning to in-person instruction, and asked the Board to balance the immediate physical safety of special needs students with not just their teachers' safety, but even more crucially with their front-line working, 1-to-1 educational assistants' safety.

Concord resident and parent Sara [Sadarky] asked for the rationale for cancelling tuitioned preschool.

Concord parent Scott Deroche asked how his son's IEP would be followed if he was not to be allowed to attend Woodside preschool.

Concord parent Heather Stalker asked about care for children of essential employees who are not able to work remotely. She was concerned about jeopardizing her child's early elementary school years, the foundation for her education.

Concord parent Kelly Thompson asked when kindergarten evaluations would be done and when the children would meet their teachers, saying this was very important.

Concord parent Denise Perham wrote that remote learning needed to be a set time with a live teacher for at least an hour or two a day for the lower grades, after which parents could maintain homework and lesson plans throughout the week.

Concord resident and parent Kate [Vaughan] reiterated the previous message. She was disappointed with the decision to be fully remote, asked what was being done for kindergarteners who had not been identified as having special needs, and said kindergarteners had not yet been screened.

Concord resident and parent Kimberly Wood appreciated the Board's interest in keeping everyone safe in this pandemic, and would not want to see infection numbers soar. However, as a mother of child with an IEP, her child would benefit from some time in the building with her teacher, with a quiet space to do her work. She understood the Board's concern about safety, but noted that students have been in the buildings for senior projects and other activities.

Deerfield resident and parent Kelly Qualey has 3 boys at CHS thanked Superintendent Murphy for updated Covid-19 information. She noted that, with its decision to be fully remote, the Board had taken away her kids' typical social and physical interactions. She noted that there had been an increase in anxiety, depression, suicide, and drug use in this pandemic. She said CHS had done a tremendous job with son on IEP even through the spring. He advocated for himself and spoke with his teachers every day. She asked that Unified Sports teams continue, as many children cannot typically play soccer or basketball.

Concord resident and parent Mose Jones-Yellin said he was happy hear thoughts and recommendations about racism/discrimination and was supportive of obtaining a skilled facilitator to shape the process. He sympathized with the Board and Superintendent as it faced difficult decisions with plenty of criticism no matter what direction they choose. He commented that Board members seemed to be relying on their "personal compasses," and though he hoped they would not be cavalier with the health of community, he expected creativity, rigorous thought prioritizing services for students at risk. He said there was a lack of discussion about how the District would make remote learning successful and how to do things differently from last semester. He asked for concrete steps on how to responsibly move toward in-person learning.

Concord resident, parent and teacher Christopher Kerr wrote that he was not in favor of resuming high-risk athletic competition, particularly as the District moved toward a hybrid model. He supported moving forward with extracurricular activities for students that permitted the same level of safety as the Board's adopted remote learning plan.

Concord parent and employee Erin Stewart wrote that the District should be focused on academics and not sports.

Concord resident, teacher and CEA President Mike Macri thanked the Board for its herculean efforts during the pandemic, and Superintendent Murphy for reaching out to CEA and meeting weekly to resolve issues. He noted that while teachers wanted to be back in person with their students, this pandemic had prevented that for many reasons. He said teaching schedules had been developed without teacher involvement. He asked that parents work with teachers as they attempt to master the new skill set of teaching remotely. He agreed with Mr. Prince that teachers want to work, but once the administration required teachers to come back to the schools to teach remotely, there were 80 more requests for ADA/FMLA accommodations. He said teachers were more than ready to take on the challenge of remote learning but have had no training.

Concord resident and parent Chris [Huey] noted that the Board had received 50+ emails from parents and students wanting extracurricular, as well as a petition with over 700 positive responses. He felt the Board should vote based on what parents have asked for, and give the decision to the child whether to participate.

Concord resident and parent Rebecca [Sirles] said she appreciated the work everyone did to combat crisis in early spring. She said while the Governor's orders provided flexibility to districts, while she appreciated safety concerns, and while Concord was in a lucky position regarding Covid-19 infection numbers, her son had special needs and received services to be the best person he could be and a member of the community. She urged the Board to identify and provide for students with special needs.

The public comment section ended. The Board recessed for a short period. Coming out of recess, Ms. Patterson called the roll of Board members; all were present.

Mr. Crush said he thought the Board needed to address teachers working remotely, and that the Board needed to vote on that. Superintendent Murphy said teaching staff could work remotely with one or more of the reasons provided in the ADA/FMLA forms.

MOTIONS

Ms. Higgins made a motion to adopt the Superintendent's recommendation to allow extracurricular programs and athletics to go forward with parental permission using the protocols from NHIAA for sports and per the prior Board vote about masking and social distancing protocols for other activities. Mr. Richards seconded the motion.

Ms. Higgins stated that, while parents tried to compare academics and athletics, she felt they were different, occurring outside and not inside. She said the plan was comprehensive and ready to go. Ms. Poinier said it was beneficial to continue health training for students who wanted it, but that competition increased risk. She was in favor of fitness and skills

training performed outdoors, but not expanding to competition. Ms. Higgins stated that NHIAA had a protocol for competitions that would take care of this concern. Superintendent Murphy noted that NHIAA had set limited distances for team travel. She noted that as soccer and football involved more interaction among students, these competitions were assigned to schools within the region. She asked Board members to keep in mind that some seniors were 18 and parental permission was not required. In response to a question from Mr. Richards about academic standards for participation in athletics, Superintendent Murphy said the same standards would be used. Mr. Crush asked to clarify whether the motion included sports, band, robotics and other programs. Superintendent Murphy that all athletic programs and extracurricular programs were included; the marching band would be allowed to practice outside after the school day, for example. Some music programs, band, and chorus count as academic programs. In response to a question whether NHIAA could force the District to shut down if there was a positive case, Superintendent Murphy said that would be up to the Board. Ms. Cannon noted that NHIAA had waived academic requirements for participation, but that there was no provision in their guidelines about how to shut something down. She agreed with Mr. Crush concerns about aerosolized droplets from musical instruments. Mr. Croteau said he was not comfortable with the District waiving any academic requirements for sports. Superintendent Murphy said the Band director had described new filters over instruments to prevent any droplets. Mr. Richards suggested that NHIAA specified in its guidelines that parents only would be allowed to view sports and would need to be socially distanced, and did not think bands would be allowed on the field. CHS Band Director Gabe Cohen commented that provisions had been made to address aerosolized droplets; the NH Music Education Coalition suggested that special covers be put over the bells of instruments and masks with slits for mouthpieces be worn. He said that keeping students six feet apart (9 feet for trombone players) and being outside were among steps taken to make sure students were safe and distanced outside. Ms. Patterson said it was helpful to know NHIAA had set standards, but the District could impose its own, stricter standards. Mr. Parker why the Board would allow extracurricular activities, which are often inside but usually masked, but not academics. He reiterated that any activity carried some risk.

Director of Physical Education and Sport Steve Mello noted that the NHIAA's fan recommendation allowed immediate family only, but whether the band would or would not play would be a separate decision. He said all safety factors were explicitly addressed in the plan, which were based on the Governor's task force and NHIAA. The only indoor sport would be volleyball, which takes place in a big room that would allow social distancing, acknowledging that when competition starts, six-foot distancing would not be possible. He noted that since July 5, all sports had been approved to play in the state. He said students had had the opportunity to practice these protocols over the summer, and his department had identified every single area that needed to be addressed. He noted that over 350 students were signed up for CHS athletics, and a survey had indicated parents were willing to accept some risks. He said students were going to play basketball or soccer in the parks or in private sports club, and middle/high school athletics would give students something safer to do from 3:30 to 5:30 pm. each day. In response to a question about

Unified Sports teams, Mr. Mello said all those students were considered athletes and were not treated differently from any other student. He spoke briefly about public health protocols that would guide responses to any Covid-19 positive case. He also said he has weekly statewide meetings of other Athletic Directors. Mr. Richards suggested the motion could be amended to specify “fall sports.” He suggested if Superintendent Murphy and Mr. Mello monitored and make sure the department was on top of the event and players from other schools, he would be comfortable with competitions.

Ms. Higgins amended the motion to refer only to fall sports. Mr. Croteau called the vote.

The Board voted by roll call 7-2 (Jennifer Patterson, Gina Cannon, Tom Croteau, Barb Higgins, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, David Parker voted aye; Chuck Crush, Liza Poinier voted nay) to allow fall sports in accordance with NHIAA guidelines, and extracurricular activities in accordance with the safety measures approved August 6 by the Board, with a strong preference for outdoor activities, with the academic standards for sports participation remaining in effect, and requiring parent/guardian permission where the students are minors (motioned by Ms. Higgins, seconded by Mr. Richards).

Ms. Higgins said she felt CRTC teachers should not be penalized for not wanting to teach in person. Mr. Parker spoke in favor of CRTC holding classes in-person. There was considerable discussion about CRTC returning to in-person instruction, and the potential for teachers teaching remotely. Superintendent Murphy said there was a level of accountability the Board had as elected leaders for the people who work for them every day. She said she needed to physically be in the District every day, and the employed staff needed to be present every day as well.

Ms. Patterson called the vote.

The Board voted by roll call 6-3 (Jennifer Patterson, Tom Croteau, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, David Parker voted aye; Ms. Cannon, Mr. Crush, Ms. Higgins voted nay) to allow in-person instruction at the CRTC in accordance with the safety protocols approved by the Board on August 6 and the plan presented and recommended by the Superintendent, provided that the matrix for responding to changed Covid-19 circumstances must be finalized and in effect by the time instruction is taking place in the buildings (motioned by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Croteau).

Ms. Patterson made a motion that in-person instruction be allowed for at-risk students (English Language Learners, homeless students, and students with IEPs/504 plans). Mr. Parker seconded the motion. She asked whether kindergarten and first and second grade students would be considered for in-school instruction. Mr. Parker said he had calls and emails about students with special needs and thought it was appropriate to start in-person instruction for those students, especially the younger children. He thought it was important to take care of the most vulnerable populations first. Superintendent Murphy said her recommendation was to include students including preschoolers with IEPs, ELL students, and students who are homeless. Staff were planning to conduct kindergarten assessments

outside under tents. She noted that administrators had done a great deal of meticulous planning, and all of it has been posted on the District website.

There were questions about teachers who did not want to come back into the buildings but did not have ADA-eligible or other accommodations. Superintendent Murphy said if a teacher did not want to come back, they would stay remote. Teacher needs, including those with anxiety about returning, would be taken into consideration. Extensive preparations had been made to ensure the safety of staff with PPE, and their choice of in-person or remote teaching. Jim Richards was in support of the motion but would like the Instructional Committee to look at kindergarten, first and second grade needs as soon as possible, as he felt the skills and learning they need to master would not be easily done remotely. Mr. Croteau asked if this population of students included kindergarten through grade 12.

The Board voted by roll call 8-1 (Jennifer Patterson, Gina Cannon, Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, David Parker voted aye; Ms. Higgins voted nay) that in-person instruction be allowed for at-risk students (English Language Learners, homeless students, and students with IEPs/504 plans) (motioned by Ms. Patterson, seconded by Mr. Parker).

Mr. Crush made a motion that teachers be allowed to work remotely while the District is operating in a remote model. Ms. Higgins seconded the motion.

Mr. Crush said that teachers had concerns about being in the buildings that did not fit existing criteria. They had also been told the Board was going to vote on whether to allow teachers to work remotely as they chose. Ms. Poinier said Board should not be involved in personnel decisions like this. Mr. Parker said whether staff worked remotely should be all-inclusive; it was not fair to accommodate one group over another; the decision should include all employees. He thought there would be enough people who would come back in person so the District could accommodate people who were afraid and just not able. Mr. Richards said he was in favor of staff being able to work remotely but was considering the needs of students and families. Ms. Higgins said she was in favor of this as long as teachers did just as good a job remotely as they would if they went in to work. She said teachers needed to be accountable, but did not think this would be a problem. She added that Superintendent Murphy's job was to ensure this, as taxpayers would not allow people to be paid for doing nothing. She asked how would staff such as bus drivers work remotely. Mr. Croteau suggested the discussion was properly in the collective bargaining arena. He asked what criteria would be required for staff to work remotely, and whether the reasons would be challenged.

Superintendent Murphy noted it was her responsibility to ensure the community that staff were performing work and earning their salaries, and she had every intention of asking staff why they would choose not to come in if they did not have extenuating circumstances. She had had this discussion with CEA President Michael Macri the previous Saturday, noting the union needed to participate in this also. She said that certain conditions, including a very ill family member who would really be in harm's way, were easily accepted with a doctor's note, for example, but it was her responsibility to carefully

consider those who have anxiety but fit no other criteria. She noted that the Board needed to have a bigger conversation about this that included crossing guards, food service workers, bus drivers, and other people who not actually working. She said the Board had made decisions in the spring to keep everyone whole financially.

Ms. Patterson said she was concerned this was not something the Board would want to take a position on, and that although staff concerns should be taken seriously, if the Board were to take a vote on it now she would vote against because she did not fully know the consequences. She said this did not mean she wasn't concerned about teachers and would like all of them to be accommodated, but asked how staff would be held accountable. Superintendent Murphy was approaching the problem and working through the issues through discussions with the unions. She suggested giving this a little more time to work.

Ms. Cannon said she had had heard from teachers who were concerned but, while she wanted to treat all employees equally, she asked how bus drivers or cafeteria workers or crossing guards could perform their jobs remotely. She suggested that teachers could be held accountable by tracking their remote work through the IT department. She asked Mr. Crush to modify his motion to cover all employees as long as they can do an equivalent job remotely.

Mr. Crush commented that the Board did owe accountability to taxpayers, and agreed that certain positions require a physical presence. He said he was initially thinking about staff who could perform their jobs remotely.

Ms. Higgins commented that the issue with all programs had been teacher concerns for having to teach in the buildings, and to add all other employees would water down the original motion. She felt this was not a personnel issue and said the Board needed to vote on this.

Mr. Crush amended his amendment to specify that teachers paraprofessionals and tutors, be allowed to work remotely while the District was operating in this fashion.

Mr. Parker said he was concerned about getting into an area properly assigned to union negotiations, and the unintended consequences of such a vote were challenging. He suggested amending the motion to read "faculty" only, instead of four different categories.

Mr. Croteau commented that the District should not pay staff unless they were doing their job while at home, stating that the District paid many staff for staying at home in the spring. He said he would support the motion as long as staff do their jobs, whether remote or not.

Mr. Richards thanked other Board members for acknowledging that anxiety was a valid reason that could prevent someone from working effectively in a building. He reiterated that decisions needed to be based on science and facts. He noted that Superintendent Murphy had expressed how she would hold staff accountable.

Mr. Parker asked if administrators would be included in this motion; Superintendent Murphy noted that all administrators had been working in their buildings throughout the summer.

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) that teachers, paraprofessionals, and tutors be allowed to work remotely while the District is operating in a remote model, so long as they fulfill their duties effectively and adhere to the schedules for that position (motioned by Mr. Crush, seconded by Ms. Higgins).

Agenda Item 11. Adjournment

The Board voted 9-0 to adjourn (motioned by Mr. Richards, seconded by Mr. Crush).

The Board adjourned at 11:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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