

Concord School District
Board of Education
Regular monthly meeting
August 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

Guest: Dr. James Noble, *Infectious Disease Specialist, Concord Hospital*

Agenda Item 1. Call to Order

Board President Jennifer Patterson called the meeting to order at 6:30 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 accept bond results and to make a decision about how to reopen for the 2020-2021 school year given the Covid-19 pandemic. This will include taking public comment as noted on the posted agenda by unmuting phone lines one by one during the public comment period. We encourage the submission of comments via e-mail at concordinfo@sau8.org.

The District is actively working on a plan to resume in-person Board meetings, and we expect to resume meeting in person by the time students return to school. We will need to provide a space that allows for both remote and in-person participation of Board members and members of the public, consistent with public health and safety protocols.

For this meeting, we continue to have no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously. 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: 991 268 400#, 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. Please note that those listening on the education channel may

need to turn up the volume on their television, as the volume for this channel is lower than for other channels.

We ask that members of the public keep their microphones muted until they are called upon during the public comment period. To reduce the likelihood of background noise, we also encourage members of the public to listen to the livestream or TV broadcast, and to rejoin the meeting (or call in) during the public comment period.

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.

Ms. Patterson then briefly reviewed the overall agenda.

Agenda Item 2. Approval of Agenda

Ms. Patterson 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 as amended (motioned by Mr. Croteau, seconded by Mr. Richards).

Agenda Item 3. Vote on Bond Results

Mr. Dunn noted that \$33.5 million general obligation bonds from the elementary school consolidation/ construction project had been refinanced on July 28 at 1.36% interest (down from 3.625%), which will save the District about \$10 million over the life of the loan. He

noted that higher interest would be paid up front (approximately 5%), a net interest cost related to the bond premium. Ms. Cannon made the following motion:

“Voted: that the sale of the \$33,550,000 General Obligation Refunding Bonds of the District dated August 13, 2020 (the “Bonds”), to Piper Sandler & Co. at the price of \$38,157,056.80 and accrued interest, if any, is hereby approved and confirmed. The Bonds shall be payable on October 15 of the years and in the principal amounts and bear interest at the respective rates, as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Interest Rate</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Interest Rate</u>
2020	\$215,000	3.00%	2031	\$1,800,000	2.00%
2021	1,660,000	5.00	2032	1,760,000	2.00
2022	1,685,000	5.00	2033	1,720,000	2.00
2023	1,705,000	5.00	2034	1,680,000	2.00
2024	1,720,000	5.00	2035	1,640,000	2.00
2025	1,735,000	5.00	2036	1,595,000	2.00
2026	1,740,000	5.00	2037	1,550,000	2.00
2027	1,760,000	5.00	2038	1,505,000	2.00
2028	1,775,000	5.00	2039	1,460,000	2.00
2029	1,790,000	5.00	2040	1,245,000	2.00
2030	1,810,000	5.00			

Further Voted: that in connection with the marketing and sale of the Bonds, the preparation and distribution of a Notice of Sale and Preliminary Official Statement dated July 20, 2020, and a final Official Statement dated July 28, 2020 (the “Official Statement”), each in such form as may be approved by the District Treasurer, be and hereby are ratified, confirmed, approved and adopted.

Further Voted: that the Bonds shall be subject to redemption, at the option of the Town, upon such terms and conditions as are set forth in the Official Statement.

Further Voted: to authorize the execution and delivery of a Refunding Escrow Agreement to be dated August 13, 2020, between the District and U.S. Bank National Association as Refunding Escrow Agent.

Further Voted: that the District Treasurer and the School Board be, and hereby are, authorized to execute and deliver a continuing disclosure undertaking in compliance with SEC Rule 15c2-12 in such form as may be approved by bond counsel to the District, which undertaking shall be incorporated by reference in the Bonds for the benefit of the holders of the Bonds from time to time.

Further Voted: that we authorize and direct the District Treasurer to establish post issuance federal tax compliance procedures and continuing disclosure procedures in such forms as

the District Treasurer and bond counsel deem sufficient, or if such procedures are currently in place, to review and update said procedures, in order to monitor and maintain the tax-exempt status of the Bonds and to comply with relevant securities laws.

Further Voted: that all things heretofore done and all action heretofore taken by the School Board and its officers and agents in its authorization of the projects and their financing are hereby ratified, approved and confirmed, and further, that any certificates or documents relating to the Bonds (collectively, the "Documents"), may be executed in several counterparts, each of which shall be regarded as an original and all of which shall constitute one and the same document; delivery of an executed counterpart of a signature page to a Document by electronic mail in a ".pdf" file or by other electronic transmission shall be as effective as delivery of a manually executed counterpart signature page to such Document; and electronic signatures on any of the Documents shall be deemed original signatures for the purposes of the Documents and all matters relating thereto, having the same legal effect as original signatures.

Further Voted: that each member of the School Board, the District Clerk and the District Treasurer be and hereby are, authorized to take any and all such actions, and execute and deliver such certificates, receipts or other documents as may be determined by them, or any of them, to be necessary or convenient to carry into effect the provisions of the foregoing votes."

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

Agenda Item 4. Return to school update

Instructional Committee Chair Barb Higgins reported on its July 22 meeting, at which the initial, detailed models for return to school were presented. All Board members attended that committee meeting. The administration presented a number of carefully considered return-to-school options to the Committee at that meeting.

Superintendent Murphy said the plans were organized in elementary, middle and high school levels. She described the principles guiding these plans: ensure the health, well-being and safety of students and staff; support students' attainment of grade and course competencies; create positive school communities that foster social/emotional growth; support the needs of vulnerable student populations; ensure equity for students across schools; provide clear and ongoing communication to all stakeholders; provide supports/resources for staff success; ensure operational and fiscal feasibility. She thanked many administrators and other staff for their significant work on these plans. She apologized for the technical difficulties that had resulted in the postponement of the meeting from August 3. She said that after the Board decided which model would be used, administrators would be empowered to finalize schedules consistent with overarching goals, using the most current effective pedagogy.

Full In-Person model

Classroom space accommodations restrict the District's ability to maintain proper physical distancing. Additional off-campus sites might be available; however, staffing (nursing and support services) and supervising those sites would not be practical. The number of students opting for full remote learning would impact the ability to bring the remainder of students into the buildings full-time. The impact of state guidance was included.

Full Remote model

Based on feedback, the remote learning model would incorporate the following revisions: more structured, live face-to-face instruction; opportunities for students to interact regularly with peers; regular communication among teachers, students, and families; ongoing feedback to students about their learning; strong assessment models to track student progress; close monitoring of student attendance; support for at-risk students and those not engaging.

Combination (Hybrid) model

Superintendent Murphy presented and recommended that the Board adopt a combination, or hybrid, model of return to school. Students would be assigned to an 'A' group or 'B' group; all siblings would be assigned to same group across levels. 'A' group would attend in-person on Monday and Thursday. 'B' group would attend in-person on Tuesday and Friday. The reason the groups were not organized Monday/Tuesday and Thursday/Friday was to avoid the 'B' group waiting until Thursday to have lessons with their teachers. Books and other materials would be taken home for work on stay-home days. On Wednesday, most students would participate in remote activities, including some live meetings, small group instruction and other on- and off-line assignments, art, music, physical education. Vulnerable/at-risk students might attend school to receive specialized instruction/support in addition to their 'A' or 'B' group plan. Notification relative to student group 'A' or 'B' assignment would be communicated to parents by the building administrators. Students (K-12) and staff would be required to wear masks while in the buildings. Some students would not be able to wear masks. Younger students (preschool and primary age) would not be asked to wear masks all day (on buses; when entering or exiting the classroom). Mask breaks would be provided throughout the day. Parents would be asked to help students get ready for school by practicing wearing masks. Class size would likely be 8-12 students. All students and staff would be expected to maintain 6-foot distances inside the building. Students would be assigned permanent seats in class. Student sharing of materials/supplies would be limited. Pathways through the building would be created that provide as little mixing of groups as possible. Outside spaces would be used for learning as much as possible (tents would be on-site). Large group meetings or events would not be held.

Superintendent Murphy requested that the Board amend the school year calendar to start on September 8, providing six days (Aug. 26-27 and Aug 31-Sept 3) for professional development, preparing for remote/hybrid learning, and training on protocols.

In response to a question about what would trigger the District to move from in-person to remote learning, Dr. Noble (see below) explained that this would reflect the status of Covid-19 infections in the community, and on the advice of Dr. Chan, State Epidemiologist. All NH DHHS advisories would be adhered to. She noted that Merrimack County had only .8 active Covid-19 cases for every 100,000 people and was considered a “green” area. If there was a suspected or confirmed positive case, the NH Public Health Department would become involved to conduct contact tracing and issue a communication plan for the District. Air handling and filtration issues were addressed with the District’s engineering firm. She discussed the District’s safety protocols, which were further detailed in documents posted on the District website. These included daily health screenings, temperature taking, hand sanitizing stations, cleaning and disinfecting routines. Visitors and vendors would not be allowed in the building during the school day whenever possible. Protocols were also established for response to symptoms or Covid-19 diagnose(s), starting with contacting the NH Public Health Department.

She briefly discussed the status of CHS and RMS athletics programs, following detailed recommendations from NHIAA.

Dr. James Noble introduced himself, noting he had practiced in New Hampshire since 2002 and had been in practice a total of 41 years as an epidemiologist and infectious disease specialist. He had worked with Covid-19 since early January, when he first saw a patient from Wuhan, China on January 23. He noted that this virus was a member of the coronavirus family. Prior to SARS coronavirus-2 (SARS COV-2) , there were six known human coronavirus types, which can cause severe laryngitis, tracheitis, pneumonia, and death. The name of the virus is actually SARS COV-2, which can cause the disease Covid-19. SARS COV-2 spread incredibly fast on a global level from January through May and June, with 18 to 20 million declared cases, and an estimated 160,000 deaths in the U.S. The virus presents significant risk of harm, especially to people with risks including those over 70, with diabetes, hypertension, and morbid obesity. Concord Hospital staff had treated over 100 Covid-19 cases with only one death, and had learned how to support patients with interventions that are known to be effective. He said that New Hampshire had had a total of 6,742 cases to date. The confirmation of a case refers to test results exhibiting the presence of fragments of SARS COV-2 RNA. Of those, 699 had to be hospitalized, with 21 currently hospitalized. The 419 known deaths were skewed to the elderly and those in nursing homes. Under the age of 40 there had been only one death; and under the age of 60, 17 deaths. He noted that New Hampshire was 49th in the U.S. in terms of numbers of cases; while low-level transmission was ongoing, a resurgence had not been observed. The growing understanding of how to treat Covid-19 has been responsible for a marked decrease in deaths. Although there were cases everywhere, intense transmission occurs in urbanized settings, related to indoor air exposure. Filtration and air exchange protocols were particularly important as the community prepared for winter. Research on the degree of intense localization of disease transmission around the world was underway. Dr. Noble said that, following the plan described above, he did not anticipate a level of illness and transmission large enough to make it necessary to close the schools, although he pointed out that not enough was known to answer everyone’s questions about every eventuality.

He said it was certainly possible to see negative events that would lead to a decision to go fully remote, but not likely. He felt that the impact of environmental transmission was less than initially thought and that normal cleaning procedures were more than sufficient. He felt it was not necessary to close schools for even a brief period for one or two cases, but vigilance about people who are ill should be maintained. He thought it was possible to have SARS COV-2 candidate vaccines released from the trial environment by November or December. He recommended that the administration meet periodically to discuss how school was going, whether objective criteria was being met and to examine teacher and student absenteeism rates. Dr. Noble noted that medical professionals often feel pressured to answer reasonable questions people have; in the clinical realm, this happens hundreds of times a day. When the knowledge base is as fragile as this situation has been, it has been possible to say a different thing at the end of the day from the beginning of the day. Professionals are trapped by the urgency of questions and rapidly changing state of knowledge. In response to a question about weekly meetings, Dr. Noble noted that, in conditions of uncertainty, guidelines like 6-foot distancing, masking, etc. could develop a totemic-like quality. When people cannot control one big thing, they often focus on controlling little things; the significance of people disregarding ordinary cautionary measures can snowball. The weekly meeting, the “huddle,” was a chance to touch up public health recommendations. In response to a question from Mr. Croteau about the likelihood of an uptick with the onset of cold weather, Dr. Noble indicated this was unlikely. He described some of the properties and process of antibodies, long-lived lymphocytes, etc. He noted an interesting series of papers coming out saying that 40% of Europeans already had T-cell immunity without ever having been exposed to SARS COV-2.

Superintendent Murphy recommended that the Board choose a hybrid return-to-school plan, which would allow the administration to start out the school year slowly, and which would allow parents to choose a remote option. She said the building administrators would enforce 6-foot distancing as well as mask wearing, and air exchange, sanitizing, and other protocols would be closely analyzed.

Ms. Patterson presented draft guiding principles for school reopening which included health/ safety, operational/ workability; equity; and learning/growth.

Agenda Item 5. Public Comment– agenda items only.

Ms. Patterson noted that the purpose of the meeting was to make a decision on school reopening, and all comments on that topic were welcomed. She said public comment would be taken by unmuting phone lines one by one. In accordance with Board Policy #136, public comments would be limited to 5 minutes per person to allow all interested parties to comment.

Concord resident and parent Jeff van Pelt referred to Covid-19 infection as “an eventuality:” if schools were opened, there would be cases, as had already been seen in Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, etc.. He asked about the Board’s plan to address that.

Concord resident and parent Kate Frey asked for an explanation about the 4x4 schedule at the high school. CHS Principal Mike Reardon said the proposed 4x4 schedule at the high school was separate from the hybrid return-to-school plan. Students traditionally take six or seven classes per year for 45 minutes each. He was proposing four classes for 90 minutes in one semester, and three or four classes in the second semester, which would take into account the inevitability of partial remote learning. With this ad hoc, one-year-only schedule, the prospect of 6–10 hours in front of the screen could be avoided. For most students, the prospect of taking 6, 7, or 8 classes at a time was overwhelming. Using this schedule, each class would be longer, but there would be fewer classes at a time. This would be the case whether in-person or remote. The same number of course would be taken over the course of the academic year.

CHS alumnus Martin Toe said he had attended many of the schools in the District and had not heard about anti-racism being included in the reopening plan, as it was known that black and brown people were disproportionately affected by Covid-19. He also asked why the Board was meeting remotely if students were going to attend school in-person. Ms. Patterson noted that the administration was working on the logistics of in-person Board meetings. She also said the issue of anti-racism would be addressed at the Board's next monthly meeting as one of the considerations related to equity. She noted that there was an extensive initiative addressing racism. Superintendent Murphy noted that issues of equity were addressed in the plan (technology and support). An anti-racism and discrimination advisory group was planned to meet on August 13. This was an important topic and those concerns were being addressed; there was a lot of work to do.

Concord resident and parent Sarah Pratt appreciated that “equity” was in the guiding principles. She said the Board needed to take equity seriously for parents who would choose a fully remote option. She asked about the availability of single-use masks, or making sure that cloth masks would be washed after one use.

CHS alumna Rigby Butler said she was disappointed about the response as to how racism would figure into the school reopening plans, noting that she had signed a petition that was sent to the Board and Superintendent with eight concrete and specific anti-racism actions, that the District: release a statement endorsing Black Lives Matter; institute comprehensive anti-racist curriculum reform; remove School Resource Officers and invest in appropriate mental health professionals; enact restorative justice disciplinary practices in school; implement mandatory training on racism and implicit bias; track and public data on racial and ethnic disparities in a variety of areas; and prioritize in the permanent Superintendent position a demonstrated capacity to enact anti-racist policies on a District level. Ms. Patterson said the administration was working on all these issues, and was taking them seriously, but the Board would not address them at this meeting as they were not the focus tonight. Ms. Butler asked how the District would make sure that students of color would not be under-resourced during this time.

Concord resident and parent Matt McNally said he shared most parents' frustration with the lack of live learning last year and asked what had been done to address that with either a remote or hybrid structure. He suggested significant additional training for teachers.

Superintendent Murphy said the need for more live instruction was recognized, and more teacher training had been provided over the summer, with more software applications to facilitate better remote learning (partially funded by the CARES Act, as well as funds that have always been budgeted for technology). No remote learning platform had been mandated for use.

Concord resident and parent Reagan Bissonnette said her concern was with the focus on students with greater needs, and whether parents who had the privilege to keep their students home for remote learning should be asked to do so, in order to offer greater access to students with greater needs.

Concord resident Sarah Robinson said she hoped the District would use the opportunity to introduce more inclusive teaching materials. She said administrators should encourage staff to use materials that were more representative of the student population. Assessment plans should be flexible and not be used against students (affecting CASL, competitive summer programs, scholarships). Teachers, parents, and students should have clear understanding of expectations of outcomes, which should be the same regardless of remote or in-person experience.

Superintendent Murphy noted that opportunities would be provided in a hybrid model for students to spend more direct time with their teachers. Some students would be primarily in remote mode but might come in for special services such as speech therapy. There might be cases where all the services in an IEP might not be possible, and compensatory services would need to be provided in the future. Some contracted providers might offer physical therapy in their offices, for example.

Deerfield resident and parent Kelly Qualey said she favored a full, 5-day-per-week return to school plan. She said that grades K-5, grades 6-8 and grades 9-12 present very different situations. She said that remote learning in the spring was unsuccessful. She asked if the Board would make a decision based on the differing needs of these separate age groups.

Concord resident and parent Zeus Simeoni said he favored the hybrid model which could work well, although it required much more teacher preparation time. He said videos created by their own teachers would be much more effective. He said he was also concerned about sports starting up, suggesting they presented unnecessary risk.

Concord resident and parent Eric Fleming said that safety was his utmost concern. He asked what after-school programming was planned, and whether details were available. Superintendent Murphy indicated that once the Board voted on a plan, the District would work with its partners to establish programs for students.

Concord resident and parent Rebecca McHugh said that Board and SAU leadership should wear masks and spend six or seven hours anywhere above the third floor at either RMS or CHS, emphasizing the effects of students wearing masks for seven hours in those poorly-ventilated buildings that are above 85 degrees.

Several emails were read into the record:

“Kelly W.” (no town stated) asked whether a test or 14-day quarantine would be required if a student showed symptoms that could indicate Covid-19.

Lisa Moore (no town stated) asked where there would be an opportunity to change their decision if her family chose the remote option initially.

Heather LeBlanc (no town stated) asked if there would be a screening table at school entrances. More than once-a-week checks should be required. What would happen to students who are sick but not with Covid-19; how would nurses support students.

“Beth” (no last name, no town stated) indicated that the Board was not adequately considering the consequences of students leaving school and returning to their families and neighborhoods.

Tanya Pinard (no town stated) asked if there was to be cleaning between group ‘A’ and group ‘B;’ if not, less likely to contain infections between the groups. If siblings attend both middle and high school, would they be assigned to the same groups.

Beth York (no town stated) said Dr. Noble’s insights were helpful and asked if it was more helpful to start more slowly and demonstrate that students could be taught safe practices to prevent the spread of the virus.

Sherry Burbank (no town stated) said it was inappropriate to expect public schools to run another model without significant additional funding; formal education should be suspended until four weeks had passed with no new cases in the county.

Teacher Amy Sherr pointed out that what happened with remote learning in the spring would be very different from what was planned for the fall. The spring experience arose from emergency planning, but teachers have now had significant training. Adults cannot follow guidelines and it would be unrealistic to assume students could do so.

Concord Sharon Gallagher and paraprofessional asked how six-foot distance could be maintained for students who require one-to-one support, and what the expectation would be for staff who are required to work with students who may require physical interventions. There have been safety issues at RMS that have led to a locked-door policy. If tents were set up, this could make students and staff vulnerable to dangerous individuals or gun violence.

Concord resident and parent Jennifer Thompson asked how the District would ensure that children with IEPs would be held to the same standards as in the full in-person model if they were in the remote or hybrid model. She said equity needed to ensure the impact on special education students was strongly considered.

Concord resident and parent Penny Duffy asked that software be made available to all students, especially those with vision issues. She said some was not effective.

“Beth” (no last name, no town stated) said that Q & A should have occurred prior to this meeting; technical problems earlier in the week should not have happened; the Board should take less.

Concord resident and parent Deborah Hoit asked if there would be enough staff willing to work in the buildings to keep class numbers low. Assuming there was enough staff, would there be enough to cover all the duties that would be beyond normal expectations for that staff member. She asked how staff would be held accountable in a remote learning environment. She asked whether partner agencies would be working within the schools to support students, staff and families.

Concord resident Shawn Hackshaw said he had listened to previous comments and wondered if Board members could voice their opinions on which plan they would prefer and why. He said it seemed most parents wanted to use caution and begin fully remote. He suggested it was possible to spread K–2 grades throughout all the schools in order to have safe in-person instruction. He said that special education services should be offered remotely, even for those with a one-on-one aide. Academic, social and emotional needs of students need to be met and parents should not have to be full-time educational assistants in a remote or in a hybrid situation.

CHS alumnus Nick Muccio reaffirmed the comments made by fellow alumni Martin and Rigby calling for anti-racist action in the District supported by signers of the petition previously referenced. He said the Board’s intention to dissociate racist work from the specifics of the reopening plan disheartening. He said he had yet to hear specific actions related to equity and anti-racism in the District. He said the response “this is not the time” had been too often used to stymie discussions of racism. He asked what specific actions would be taken to address racial inequality in the District in the reopening plan.

Ms. Higgins commented that the pandemic affects people differently, and affects people of color disproportionately. Ms. Patterson commented that Board members could not talk with each other except in a public meeting. During the meeting, they typically hear from the public and only then talk with each other. She said that those who raised these issues would hear the Board discuss them later, but they were not there to engage in a back-and-forth conversation with every commenter. Mr. Parker noted that individual Board members had responded to certain callers, and suggested the Board be consistent. He said that the administration had been doing significant work on anti-racism, and significant work on many other issues. Ms. Patterson said some specific questions could be answered by administrators, and those comments or questions might be responded to; but suggested that they try not to engage in a dialogue as a Board.

Concord resident and parent Lisabritt Solsky expressed disappointment about the meeting technology. Mr. Richards clarified that every phone number listed in the participant list had been called on in case they had questions, but most did not. She asked how safety would be ensured for students riding school buses. She suggested the model of Monday/Thursday and Tuesday/Friday cohorts would increase the chance of contamination.

Concord resident and former parent Melissa Hinebauch echoed concerns about the meeting technology. She suggested that comments from others, submitted by email, had not been read. She said she was concerned about the District losing funding if parents pulled their students out of public school and into private schools, and asked what the District could do so numbers did not affect its finances for 2022-2023. She stated that the removal of students might create a new segregated society, and asked how that was being addressed by the District.

Concord high school senior Mattison Howard echoed sentiments expressed by Martin, Nick and Rigby, noting that she was disappointed with the Board's response. She said the District had dismissed grievances of students of color and had not yet issued a statement regarding them. She said there was no universal solution across all grades but felt that students should not be physically going back to school; that teaching needed to be fully remote. She felt that teachers who were not comfortable teaching in person should have the option to teach remotely.

Ms. Cannon indicated that parents did have that option.

Concord resident and parent Ryan Vacca asked whether, assuming the Board did not choose the fully remote option, parents would have an opportunity to reassess and change to the other option at one or more points during the year. Superintendent Murphy said that administrators wanted parents to be involved in the decisions and should conditions change, wanted to offer the option for students to return. This is why three plans were fully developed.

Several emails were read into the record:

RMS Instructional Assistant Christopher Russell (no town stated) said that his experience with remote learning was positive but required hard work in presentation mode for both teachers and students.

RMS Teacher Linda O'Rourke stated that rooms at Rundlett could become very hot.

Teacher Maria Iozza asked who would make decisions about which classes in the 4 x 4 block at CHS.

Concord resident and parent Gretchen Stallings thanked and appreciated Superintendent Murphy and the Board for the work they had been doing to make sure everyone was heard. She said the compassion and leadership shown through this was exceptional, and expressed appreciation for the work everyone was doing to shepherd the best solution to the problems at hand.

Concord resident and parent Mose Jones-Yellin commented that the YouTube video was several minutes delayed from the phone access. He said he found it shameful that questions about racism and discrimination were met with irritation and avoidance from Board members. He said it was difficult to deal with and explain to his children. He was also troubled by the presentation of hybrid as the only recommended model, and felt the screening plan (if hybrid) showed a lack of respect for the prevalence of asymptomatic

contagious people in the community. He expressed concern about testing for school employees and the plan to thoroughly clean the buildings between cohorts.

Concord resident and parent Wassim Eltaki asked about special education services to make up sessions missed in the spring. Superintendent Murphy responded that the Governor had noted in his executive order that Districts had between now and September 30 to hold meetings with parents of special education students to determine compensatory services to satisfy students' IEPs.

Several emails were read into the record:

Concord resident and parent Heather Walker-White asked if school was fully remote, why would the District allow sports or music programs.

Concord resident and parent Jacqueline Figueroa said she supported the fully in-person model.

Concord resident Kelly Martin asked the Board to get to the vote.

Concord resident and parent Karen Craver expressed concerns about the safety of students, parents, staff and families. She said underlying conditions were not limited to adults; children also have underlying conditions. Additionally, there would always be a segment of the population needing a solution that allows for in-person learning. We need a plan that creates a safe learning environment for the children of front-line workers. She promoted home learning for those who could manage it. She suggested hazard pay for staff for the risk they would incur in an in-person model. She thanked teachers for their hard work in spring.

Concord resident "Melanie" (no last name provided) said she had one student who lost essential credits last spring. She initially pursued remote learning for summer school but failed; later did hybrid and succeeded. Her 8th grade student was 100% disengaged in the remote learning model. "Melanie" said she was an essential worker for 9 hours a day, wearing full PPE. Her children were home by themselves. She thanked CRTC for its important programs. She was in favor of going back to school in person, stating that every year when students went back to school, herd immunity was developed for common colds, etc. She did recognize there was a difference in the upcoming flu season with Covid-19. She said that not all students could be remote learners and hope there would be significant improvement for remote learning. She said many families were struggling and looking at private schools and alternatives. She also asked people to be a little nicer to each other.

Concord resident Dady Burns said she was an incoming CHS sophomore and was in favor of going back to school in person. She said she saw her siblings' education suffer with remote learning last spring. He said many students had not done any work at all and that they were still congregating after school, so they might as well have school in person and have a better education. She said her stay-at-home mom taught younger siblings all day.

Concord resident and parent Krista Robichaud said she had typed a comment in the chat box at last week's meeting but had not received a response. She said she and her husband were good at homeschooling their son but would also be fine with a hybrid model. Their

son would particularly like to physically attend school for music and art, and she asked if this could be an option, with fully remote for the rest of his learning. She said she and her husband were supportive of going back to school in-person.

CHS alumnus Mohan Manali said that he and other students had experienced racism and bullying at CHS. He suggested that the Board was potentially bringing students back to school where they would be experiencing two diseases: Covid-19, and racism. He said that the Board's responses indicated these issues would be addressed at some later time, yet some questions had been answered and some had not been responded to. He asked Board members to resign if they would not address and fix the concerns about racism currently at CHS. He asked Board members to take responsibility if someone became sick or died due to their decision to send students back to school, and resign.

CHS Principal Mike Reardon responded by saying at CHS, we are far from perfect. But we recognize struggles of a lot of our kids, and particularly kids of color. He briefly described some of the things that had been started, including convening three listening groups of 10-12 kids to talk about racism in the school and in the community and have taken some actions. One junior had formed a Black Student Union and was inviting students of all colors to become a part of it. A series of "Who Am I" talks had been launched in which students volunteer to spend five minutes each week talking about themselves and their values. An art museum had been started on Main Street with art that reflected not just the Western tradition but many countries from which the refugee populations originate. Advisories were starting in the fall to create safe student communities with focused teachers. Students would have a chance to display competencies on different paths. The Social Studies/History department was doing a curriculum review. The District was preparing to release disciplinary statistics. He was very interested in recruiting staff of color. She said he wanted the people who spoke eloquently tonight to know that the District and CHS take these issues very seriously. He recognized that it was impossible to make everything perfect immediately, but that work had begun and there was positive will and energy behind it.

Concord resident and parent Tina Philibotte thanked the Board for its work, and echoed comments on equity and cultural competence. She said she preferred a mostly remote (not hybrid) model. She discussed whether teachers had the choice to stay at home and the basis for that; the investment of teacher training time over the summer; her hope that families would choose to keep their students in the District; and the fact that the major counseling services were not doing face-to-face counseling. She noted that her daughter Mattison Howard had been interrupted when speaking, and felt this was an equity issue. She said the pandemic situation was really difficult, and the community needed to be compassionate toward each other. She felt the interruptions should have been addressed at that moment. She thought it was interesting that CHS Principal Reardon spoke immediately after the alumni spoke. She suggested that teachers also have the opportunity to talk about themselves and their values, teaching cultural competencies.

Erika Markson said she was studying elementary education with a special education focus at SNHU and planned to be student teaching at BMS. She said remote learning had

damaged students with IEPs and 504 plans. She said it was difficult for students to be motivated to complete their work remotely, and she thought hybrid was the best model. She stated that this risk might be a hard choice with teachers and students, but developmentally was the best option for students.

In response to a question from Keali Smith (no town given) about mandatory mask wearing, Superintendent Murphy said this would vary based on students' age. Mask breaks would have to be frequent, after finishing a reading or math project, for example. She said getting students outside was best, and young students would not be expected to wear masks for three to four hours at a time.

"Ralph" (no last name, no town stated) expressed concerns about teachers, students, staff, and cafeteria workers going back into the buildings. She said learning would come, but only if students had lives to live. She believed that remote learning would improve with ongoing teachers training.

Concord resident Shawn Hackshaw suggested that remote learning needed to be live and synchronous, with schedules for children to follow.

Concord resident and parent Rebecca McHugh said that Manchester had proposed its draft plan, noting that it would take months to set up plan. She described the plan, a mixture of hybrid and remote, for the Board's consideration. She asked how equity would be managed to show a full year of competencies if the 4x4 model was adopted at CHS.

"Ralph" asked how support staff would be able to maintain 6-foot spacing from their students.

Several emails were read into the record:

Concord teacher Susan Carignan asked that preschool be addressed as well.

Candy Dennison (no town given) said the Board was taking too much time before voting.

Concord resident and parent Erin Sharkey asked who would be teaching the students in-person if their teachers were choosing to stay at home.

Concord resident and parent Lauren Howard complimented her children's RMS teachers for their remote learning experience last spring. She expressed concern about her children going back into the buildings.

Concord CHS student Ella White said she hoped the District would choose a fully-remote model. She asked for more options for students who struggled emotionally or socially. She said administrators, teachers and staff themselves should also wear masks in public to model this for their students.

Concord resident and parent John Drew thanked the Board for its challenging work. He said he was impressed with the due diligence undertaken, and supported the hybrid model. He said there was significant pressure to keep the schools closed and did not support that.

Concord resident Sarah Aiken asked what the District would do for students who could not wear a mask, especially special education students.

Concord resident Anne Zinkin said she was comfortable with the hybrid option, with at least some in-person time with teachers.

The Board recessed for 10 minutes. After the Board reconvened, Ms. Patterson took roll call again and all Board members were present.

Ms. Patterson said she struggled with questions about equity, and safety, and suggested focusing on how the Board could help the District be flexible while still supporting the District's guiding principles on re-opening.

Ms. Higgins said she was not comfortable as a parent, teacher or Board member having her name attached to any plan that put staff and students at risk. She felt the District was not ready. She felt there were students who needed their remote learning in a safe place.

Mr. Parker said he had read every comment and listened to everyone's opinion, and felt no decision would necessarily be right. He asked what sort of risk families and the Board were willing to take, as nothing was risk free. Staying fully remote had its own risks. He noted that students were already hanging out with friends, with family. He noted that daycare was provided for many families in the school system. He said the hybrid model was the risk he was willing to take, giving the opportunity to be in the buildings in some capacity.

Ms. Cannon said she did not think students and teachers should return to schools right now. She suspected there would be a spike in infections with college and law students returning. She said adults had problems wearing masks and children would too. There was not enough floor space for everyone to return to the buildings with social distancing. She felt the best was remote for everyone, with space for kids who could not be home or need particular services.

Mr. Croteau said he had no doubt that administrators and teacher could do an excellent job teaching remotely, and with any other model, students, teachers or parents could not be guaranteed safety. He favored the completely remote model, and hoped for a vaccine soon.

Mr. Crush said well-meaning staff could miss taking a temperature with widespread consequences. He asked if the Board was ready to take part in an experiment where teachers and students were the test subjects in the Covid-19 pandemic. He felt the District needed to work toward being the best at remote learning that it could be. He said it was important to look at psycho-social emotional learning components. He said some students would need in-person instruction, but for the safety of staff, students, families, the District should remain remote for a good period of time.

Danielle Smith stated that she felt there were many questions and details to work out for the hybrid model and was nervous to send students back. She said she spoke with a teacher earlier this week who had decided to stay remote because her husband was undergoing chemo, but was feeling badly for her peers who did not have that reason but wanted to give everything for their students. She said she would rather be overly cautious than regret that decision for the community.

Liza Poinier said she felt the Board had a complete understanding of all the factors it did not understand. She said she felt anxiety about the return to school plan, and was grateful

to hear Dr. Noble's comments about risk. She said that numbers were very low in Merrimack County and in Concord, but the various family networks for all the people in the community were unknown. She said she would prefer to have students in school for the first two weeks to meet their teachers and classmates, then go to remote for the next period of time. She said she was not comfortable forcing people to go back into the classroom.

Mr. Richards thanked everyone in the community for participating and being patient. Speaking for himself, he said that black lives matter. He said the Board would definitely be addressing bullying and racism; this was not tonight's agenda, but these issues would be addressed. He was very concerned about families that did not have a stay-at-home mom or dad, were essential workers, or were economically disadvantaged. He said that was an equity issue. He favored the hybrid model, with a mandate for mask wearing, distancing, one-way corridors, etc. He noted that the moment these protocols were not followed (students or teachers), he advocated pulling the plug and go remote.

Ms. Patterson said the administrators did a great job designing a plan allowing for choice, but that choice might exacerbate or create inequities. Administrators had worked very hard to build equitable, balanced classes in the remote model. She was learning toward that to start the year, and get to in-person as quickly as feasible.

Ms. Cannon said she was torn about the needs of PreK through grade 1 students, whose needs included socialization. She wondered how they would be able to socialize six feet away from one another, how mask wearing would work, how they would interact with their peers, or share toys.

Superintendent Murphy asked how the community would respond to the message that youngsters with special needs would come into the schools while others would stay at home. She said that basic social emotional development for the youngest grades was fundamental, and that Concord was not a hotspot for Covid-19 infections.

She also briefly discussed the work that had already been done to address and begin to work on equity issues. She had been in discussions with Jim McKim of NH NAACP and NH Listens, had engaged in curriculum reform discussions, and facilitated discussions with students. She said some of the callers weren't aware any of these actions had already been taking place.

Ms. Patterson said that most of the commenters regarding racism may have been recommending a full-remote start.

In response to a suggestion whether the Board should vote on elementary, middle and high school plans separately, Superintendent Murphy said the middle and high school administrators felt they could do more work remotely because students were more independent. Elementary administrators preferred the younger students to be in school because of social/emotional development. She said around 25% of parents to date had indicated they wanted their children to attend remotely.

Ms. Higgins suggested that Concord, with a smaller population, had a lower number of active Covid-19 cases because generally, masks were being worn and social distancing was being observed. She said the Board should tell the community the District would start out remote and take two months to get staff and students back in the buildings. She said that typically developing students should stay at home and students with IEPs and other particular needs should go to school for their services.

Ms. Cannon said that in addition to special education students there was a need for single-parent families or those with two parents working to have a place for their children to come and be supervised. She suggested using teachers who were willing to come in to monitor these students.

Mr. Parker commented that public schools play many roles, including care for children while parents were working. He was in favor of the hybrid model, because a fully remote schedule was an elitist solution that would be impossible for all the hardworking people.

Mr. Crush contended that the District should start off for the safety of families, teachers, students in a remote model. He felt provisions needed to be in place for students who need additional services, support for PT/OT/speech, and for students whose parents must go back to work. He did not want to disadvantage anyone or promote inequity.

Ms. Cannon said the solution was to have everyone be remote, and children who needed supervision because both parents needed to work would be allowed to come into the school on a case-by-case basis, to continue to learn remotely. One of the bases of the public education system is that children are required to be in school for a set number of hours every weekday, and therefore parents can work.

Mr. Parker commented that many people might have a computer but lacked Internet access. He said if the plan was remote learning, the District would realistically be providing only a certain number of students their education. He thought there was a large risk for students not seeing each other. Ms. Palley said administrators knew how many families needed support to access the Internet; Comcast offered 60 days free and had extended signup for this program to December. After that the cost was \$9.99 per month, which the District could help pay for.

Mr. Richards said better remote learning would disadvantage students who did not have broadband Internet access. If students came into school in classes with their Chromebooks, that would be a hybrid model for those students. Superintendent Murphy said the Board had discussed the special needs of ELL students, students with IEPs and 504s, students both of whose parents needed to go to work, students who did not have access to the Internet, and those who needed to be supervised. She said with these provisions, the Board had created a hybrid model.

Ms. Palley noted that about 500 students would be at CHS, and perhaps 400 at RMS on a given day in the hybrid model. Mr. Crush suggested allowing students in school on a case-by-case basis, which would not include special education students if their educational needs could be met remotely.

Ms. Higgins suggested that some parents would set up supervision groups for their children learning remotely. Other students living in unsafe situations might come into the schools in small groups to have spaces to work remotely with supervision. She said the only practical option was the fully remote model, and that not enough was in place yet to select a hybrid model.

Superintendent Murphy suggested that if the Board voted on a remote model, she would meet with administrators to address questions about the most fragile students (not just ELL or special education students, but also those who are not engaged). She needed to assess staff and see who was willing to come in. A recent survey indicated only 25 teachers had asked to be remote due to ADA, FMLA, or significant childcare issues. She said the teachers' union promised they would help and would not put up any barriers. She was unsure if there would be enough staff to cover those students Ms. Cannon and Mr. Crush indicated should come in. If teachers were teaching all their classes remotely, she could not put an uncertified or unqualified person in a classroom managing students.

Mr. Richards made a motion that all students and staff, K-2, would be required to wear masks while in the buildings and on the grounds unless a medical accommodation prevented a person from doing so. Mask breaks will be provided throughout the day. Ms. Higgins seconded the motion.

Mr. Richards asked about the proposed 4 x 4 schedule at CHS, indicating that he had not hear that parents or students wanted it. Superintendent Murphy said that she and Mr. Reardon had talked about the 4 x 4 schedule, that he had met with staff to discuss it, and they were still in the planning stage. This schedule had not yet been approved. She suggested giving the administrative staff a chance to work on schedules. She said the schedule would come before the Central Office administrators and would then be brought to the Instructional Committee. Ms. Patterson suggested the Board not preclude creative solutions.

The Board voted 9-0 by roll call (Jennifer Patterson, Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, Gina Cannon, Barb Higgins, David Parker voted) to make mask-wearing mandatory for everyone while in the buildings and on the grounds unless a medical condition prevents a person from doing so (motioned by Mr. Richards, seconded by Ms. Higgins).

Mr. Richards made a motion that a 6-foot distance between individuals be maintained throughout the buildings whenever possible. Mr. Croteau seconded the motion.

The Board voted 9-0 by roll call (Jennifer Patterson, Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, Gina Cannon, Barb Higgins, David Parker voted) to require that 6-foot distance between individuals is maintained throughout the buildings whenever possible (motioned by Mr. Richards, seconded by Mr. Croteau).

Mr. Croteau made a motion that the District employ a remote learning plan with a check-in each week as to whether any changes need to be made. Ms. Higgins seconded the motion.

Mr. Richards asked whether all schools, CRTC and preschool were included in the motion. Ms. Poinier suggested preschool and CRTC should be included in current motion, although CRTC's plans were quite advanced, and that the Board would discuss at its next meeting. She said NHIAA came out with a full athletics schedule today. She was also concerned about preschoolers; only preschoolers who require services. She agreed with the motion but suggested meeting again in a week to discuss athletics, CRTC, and preschool. CRTC is almost entirely hands-on, project-based learning.

The Board voted 9-0 by roll call (Jennifer Patterson, Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, Gina Cannon, Barb Higgins, David Parker voted aye) to employ a remote learning model for all schools in the District starting September 8, with a weekly check-in about whether any changes need to be made (motioned by Mr. Croteau, seconded by Ms. Higgins).

Mr. Crush made a motion to revise the school year calendar to set the first day of school for students as September 8, 2020. This would give the administration and teachers more time for training and preparation for the new teaching model.

The Board voted 9-0 by roll call (Jennifer Patterson, Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, Gina Cannon, Barb Higgins, David Parker voted aye) to adjust the school year calendar such that the first day of school is September 8, 2020 for students, with August 26, 27, and August 31 to September 3 used for teacher training and preparation (motioned by Mr. Crush, seconded by Mr. Richards).

Agenda Item 12. Adjournment

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

The Board adjourned at 12:07 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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