

Concord School District
Board of Education
Regular monthly meeting
September 8, 2020

Board members present: Jim Richards, *Acting President*; Gina Cannon, Tom Croteau, Barb Higgins, Danielle Smith, David Parker (Liza Poinier and Chuck Crush participated remotely)

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

Agenda Item 1. Call to Order

Acting President Jim Richards called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and noted that the meeting constituted a quorum of Board members. As several Board members participated electronically, any votes would be by roll call. He noted that public access to the meeting by telephone was provided, with additional access by other electronic means. The meeting was broadcasted contemporaneously on ConcordTV's education channel (Comcast Channel 6 or www.youtube.com/ConcordNHTV). He noted the Board would take public comment in two public comment periods by unmuting phone lines one by one, and encouraged the submission of comments via e-mail at concordinfo@sau8.org.

Mr. Richards said he 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). The following Board members noted that they were present: Gina Cannon, Tom Croteau, Barb Higgins, David Parker, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith (Chuck Crush and Liza Poinier participated remotely and affirmed that no one else was present in the room with them).

He then read memorials and asked for a moment of silence to acknowledge the recent death of two much loved RMS teachers, Jennifer O'Sullivan and Michele Bartlett.

Agenda Item 2. Approval of agenda

Mr. Richards made a motion to approve the agenda. He motioned to amend: add (a) to recognize Jennifer Patterson and (c) appoint a candidate to fill a Board vacancy.

The Board voted by roll call 8-0 (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).

Mr. Crush made a motion to amend the agenda with another item to discuss future meetings and to conduct them both in-person as well as remotely. Mr. Croteau asked for more information about his motion. Mr. Crush said he wanted to talk about procedures for having public meetings (health screenings, temperature-taking, etc.) and wanted to allow the public to have access through *Teams* or other electronic means.

The Board voted by roll call 8-0 (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. Crush, seconded by Ms. Smith).

Mr. Richards asked for a motion to accept the agenda as amended. Ms. Higgins made the motion and Mr. Croteau seconded the motion.

The Board voted by roll call 8-0 (Gina Cannon, Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Barb Higgins, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, David Parker voted aye) to approve the agenda as amended (motioned by Ms. Higgins, seconded by Mr. Croteau).

Agenda Item 3.

Ms. Higgins read a resolution recognizing the Board service of Jennifer Patterson. Mr. Croteau made a motion to adopt the resolution. Mr. Richards noted he had had the pleasure of working with Ms. Patterson over six years as a member and Board officer, stating that she had an overriding concern with everyone in the Concord school community. He said he would miss her experience, knowledge, and thoughtful counsel. Mr. Croteau said he had worked as her Board Vice President and colleague, and that she brought dignity and thoughtfulness to everything she did. Ms. Higgins said that she was able to keep track of every rule and statute to make sure the Board was correct in its work.

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

Mr. Richards asked Gina Cannon to chair the Communications & Policy Committee.

Nomination of Board member to fill vacancy per Policy #115 Board Member or District Officer Resignation. Mr. Richards nominated Maureen Redmond-Scura to fill the term of Jennifer Patterson until the November 3 election. She previously served on the Board as a member and Board Secretary, and was an original Charter Commission member. He asked the Superintendent to check with Counsel about the date the electee would begin to finish out Ms. Patterson's term. Ms. Higgins made the motion and Mr. Croteau seconded.

The Board voted by roll call 8-0 (Gina Cannon, Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Barb Higgins, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, David Parker voted aye) to approve the nomination of Maureen Redmond-Scura to fill the position vacated

by Jennifer Patterson until the election on November 3 (motioned by Mr. Richards, seconded by Mr. Croteau).

Policy #121 Elections requires the replacement of any officer whose position becomes open. Mr. Richards noted a Vice President was needed, as he was automatically moved into the presidency. Mr. Crush nominated Tom Croteau as Vice President; Ms. Higgins seconded.

The Board voted by roll call 8-0 (Gina Cannon, Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Barb Higgins, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, David Parker voted aye) to approve Tom Croteau as Vice President of the Board (motioned by Mr. Crush, seconded by Ms. Higgins).

Agenda Item 4. Approval of Board minutes

Mr. Richards briefly reviewed the minutes of the Board meetings on August 6, August 10, August 17, and August 24.

The Board voted by roll call 8-0 (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 meetings on August 6, August 10, August 17, and August 24 (moved by Ms. Cannon, seconded by Ms. Smith).

Agenda Item 5. Recognitions and reports

Superintendent Murphy provided an update on the return to school remote learning model, with information about students with IEPs and 504 plans, ELL students and homeless students. There was a focus on ensuring students had technology to meet their needs. She noted school was off to a good start. Athletics and extracurricular activities would continue carefully. The District would be delivering food for any family for breakfast and lunch, per a federal waiver. She talked about a neighborhood meeting for ELL learner families last week at Keach Park. She noted that student attendance would be a focus.

Mr. Crush added that his daughter's special education teachers had put out a phenomenal effort that day to create connection. Superintendent Murphy noted that social-emotional learning was a priority for teachers. Jack Dunn said the Boys & Girls Club was normally a completely separate program, but had offered to host children while they were doing their remote learning. Student Board representative Alice Richards said her first-day experience was positive.

Regarding the criteria to move from one model to another, Superintendent Murphy reiterated that testing would be done via private healthcare providers or clinics, and contact tracing would be done by NH Public Health Services. She had the responsibility to make sure families understand the Covid-19 status of the District on any given day, and would utilize the communications consultant to help make sure that communication was exact, succinct, and clear to avoid confusion.

Superintendent Murphy displayed and discussed a matrix of work to address anti-racism, and the notes of the Racism/Discrimination Advisory Group and its August 13 meeting. Noting that the District was limited in staff diversity, she said HR Director Larry Prince was working to expand that. As a major recommendation was curriculum review, the Social Studies and English Language Arts departments began work over the summer. Some of these goals would involve students, the Title IX Compliance Office, and possible revision of Board policy (bullying), etc. She noted that one recommendation was to review the role of the School Resource Officer (SRO), and acknowledged this was controversial. The administration was gathering data related to discipline rates, access to AP classes, economic barriers to success, and other areas. A facilitator would be hired to help with this work.

Superintendent Murphy displayed and discussed a matrix (action plan) describing in detail the status of recommendations in the Perkins report related to student safety, noting that much work had already been done to address issues that arose in report. She noted that the School Safety Officer, Karen Fischer-Anderson, had been conducting training all summer, and ensuring students and community members had access to the reporting process. The matrix would be posted and used as a roadmap. She noted that training would take place annually, to include new staff, and provide new information and the latest research.

Mr. Croteau asked the administration to conduct a school climate survey or assessment in the middle of school year. Mr. Crush asked whether reports to police or DYCF were tracked. Superintendent Murphy noted that every year an extensive safety report was made to the State covering drugs, weapons, racism, and bullying, and that information was posted on the NH DOE website. The District was also maintaining abuse and neglect reports; however, it was DCYF's role to resolve abuse incidents.

Superintendent Murphy commented the the media consultant assistance was helpful to craft communications she put out into the community upon the release of the Perkins report, as she had only been in the District for a few days. She had used only 15 contracted hours to date. The intent was to make sure communications were correct and all appropriate social media outlets were used.

Donna Palley described professional trainings for staff since July, noting over 350 participants in the District's system. The major topics were social/emotional wellbeing for staff; social/emotional learning for students; teaching strategies for remote learning; teaching technology; Covid-19 safety procedures and protocols led by District nurses; remote learning supports (Google classroom, Zoom, Seesaw); emphasis on math, etc.

She described for the Board that every certified staff person was on a 3-year recertification cycle, with all requisite hours recorded in *My Learning Plan*. Each was required to accrue professional development hours in their certification area, and additional hours for training on District/school goals.

Mr. Cashman described HVAC updates at each of the schools, reflecting guidelines published by the CDC and ASHRA. They recommend conducting an assessment of HVAC systems, bringing in 100% outside fresh (filtrated) air, and measuring indoor air quality. The District's subcontractor Traine Industry changes 1,000 air filters each quarter over a 3-

year cycle. Another contractor, Siemens turned on and tested all systems to bring in outside air 24 hours a day, seven days per week, and found acceptable indoor air quality for all buildings. The District's industrial hygienists, The Lawson Group, conducted measurements to ensure whether high-quality air was needed in buildings, checking levels of carbon monoxide, indoor air particles, moisture, and mold spores, then doing a visual inspection and assessment of the air handling units. The filters were also checked and changed. A published report would be available by the end of the week. The Lawson Group would later meet with the Capital Facilities Committee. Initial test results as well as mold were well within the acceptable indoor air quality ratings standard.

Mr. Richards called a 5-minute recess.

Agenda Item 6. Public comment

Members of the public providing input to the Board included Kimberly Wood, who reported that students had not started at RMS. Kate Frey asked for clarification of the Perkins Report action matrix related to comments such as "disagreed" or "agreed in part." She said she was also disappointed in the lack of information about the work of the communications consultant and suggested a public forum on the Board member nominee should have been held. Jonathan Lax hoped that, reviewing guidance from the State, the District would go back to hybrid. Rebecca Duclos-McHugh expressed a concern about special education students at RMS, who were not yet back in the building.

Agenda Item 7. Personnel

Larry Prince a professional leave of absence.

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

Larry Prince presented several teacher confirmations.

Megan Birch, English Teacher, Concord High School, \$52,982, 60% of M+30-14, one year only. *Certification:* Experienced Educator Certificate, exp. 06/30/23

English Education (5-12), Curriculum Administrator. Megan replaces Heidi Crumrine (40% of M+30-14 = \$35,322) – LOA and Kristen Houghton (20% of M-14 = \$17,121) – LOA.

Budgeted at \$52,443

Elizabeth O'Neil, English Teacher, Concord High School, \$54,611, M-3, 20%, one year only.

Certification: Beginning Educator Certificate, exp. 06/30/23, English Education (5-12).

Elizabeth replaces Zachary Procek (60% of M-2 = \$31,228) – transfer, Kaileen Chilauskas (20% of M-14 = \$17,121) – transfer to CAA, and Kristen Houghton (20% of M-14 = \$17,121) – LOA.

Budgeted at \$65,470

Rebecca Dutcher, Guidance Counselor, Abbot-Downing School, \$52,046, M-2. *Certification:* Beginning Educator Certificate, exp. 06/30/22, School Counselor. Rebecca replaces Melanie McSteen (M+30-14 = \$88,304) – retirement. Budgeted at \$88,304

The Board voted by roll call 9–0 (Gina Cannon, Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Barb Higgins, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, David Parker, Maureen Redmond-Scura voted aye) to approve the teacher confirmations as presented (moved by Mr. Croteau, seconded by Mr. Crush).

Larry Prince presented one teacher nomination.

Elizabeth York, English Teacher, Concord Regional Technical Center, \$35,322, 40% of M+30-14, one year only. Elizabeth currently holds this position and is once again requesting a partial leave of absence from her English teacher position at Concord High School to accept this assignment. Elizabeth has been employed as a teacher with Concord School District since 1990. Federal Funds

The Board voted by roll call 9–0 (Gina Cannon, Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Barb Higgins, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, David Parker, Maureen Redmond-Scura voted aye) to approve the teacher position as presented (moved by Ms. Higgins, seconded by Ms. Smith).

Larry Prince presented several coach nominations.

Bienvenu Kigugu (Kaneza), Boys Freshman Soccer Coach, Concord High School, \$2,474, Step 2, Group 11, 5.5%. Bienvenu replaces Simon Parsons

Amy Montanez, Girls JV Soccer Coach, Concord High School, \$3,149, Step 3, Group 9, 7.0%. Amy replaces Sarah Fuhrmeister

Austin Brehio, Girls Freshman Soccer Coach, Concord High School, \$2,249, Step 1, Group 11, 5.0%. Austin replaces Amy Montanez

The Board voted by roll call 8–0 with one abstention (Gina Cannon, Tom Croteau, Barb Higgins, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, David Parker, Maureen Redmond-Scura voted aye; Mr. Crush abstained) to approve the coach nominations as presented (moved by Ms. Cannon, seconded by Mr. Parker).

Mr. Prince said the District received over 350 requests to work remotely after the Board vote on August 6. He was working on formal responses to teachers to notify them if they were not planning to return to the buildings, the District might have no work for them remotely and they would be furloughed. Staff had been given until September 18 to talk with their building administrators about a schedule; if not, they would be furloughed. If a staff member was unable to work because of childcare, this would be a FFCRA leave of absence and the staff member would be paid at 2/3 of pay for 12 weeks. He noted that, once the District moved to hybrid, these requests and schedules would change.

To a question about staffing in a hybrid model, Superintendent Murphy said that many staff took the option after the Board voted they could work remotely, but many others did come in, perhaps to protect themselves if the situation changed in the future. She noted that

currently RMS had 35 teachers in the building. Final staffing numbers would be available the next day.

Agenda Item 8. Negotiations

Committee chair Chuck Crush reported that the committee met on September 1. The negotiating team consisted of committee members, Mr. Dunn and Mr. Prince.

Agenda item 9. City & Community Relations

Committee chair Liza Poinier reported on the meeting of August 24. Superintendent Murphy updated the committee on her meeting with City Manager Tom Aspell and Mayor Jim Bouley. Mr. Dunn described the status of the Stable building project. Mr. Richards described the location of Stable building and noted they were hoping for answers to several questions before this was taken up at a Capital Facilities Committee meeting. As a contract to transfer the building to the City would be required, he was unsure which committees would be involved. He confirmed that the Abbot-Downing Historical Society would pay for any renovations.

Agenda Item 10. Instruction

Committee chair Barb Higgins reported on the meeting of August 31. The committee voted for a transition to the hybrid model presented at the August 6, 2020 Board meeting starting in October, initially with K, grades 6 and 9; with the rest of the grades starting October 12. The committee also discussed monitoring, professional development, etc.

Ms. Higgins made a motion to move to a hybrid model as described above. Mr. Parker seconded the motion.

Ms. Smith suggested amending the motion to add “provided data is in compliance with the matrix presented by the Superintendent tonight for a hybrid learning model.”

Mr. Crush said that spikes in infection numbers were predicted in October, and that three students at Windham had tested positive for Covid-19. He asked whether this decision should go to Communications & Policy Committee to be first considered as a policy. He also wanted to have the question answered about staffing/special ed students not at RMS yet. Superintendent Murphy said District would be notified by the NH Department of Public Health Services about any increases in numbers. She said the use of the matrices to decide whether to move to a hybrid model was not a policy, but rather tools to help make the decision. She said it was important to keep an eye on Public Health’s School Dashboard, and she had made this recommendation to the Instructional Committee based on hard data. She said she could not answer why Principal Fitzgerald’s email indicated the start of school as September 21, but would talk with her about this. Superintendent Murphy said based on the 25% of parents who still want the remote model, she reviewed all staff requests for remote. Teachers who fit the criteria would be allowed to teach remotely.

Ms. Higgins said she felt the remote plan came together very well since August 6, and that the Board needed to set a deadline knowing that many things could change it, rather than wait for data it does not yet have. She felt the Board should put together a good safe hybrid program now. Mr. Parker noted that some constituents were not happy and some were, but the Board had to make a decision about moving forward. The model can change if necessary.

Ms. Higgins motioned to accept the amendment. Ms. Cannon seconded

The Board voted by roll call 9–0 (Gina Cannon, Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Barb Higgins, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, David Parker, Maureen Redmond-Scura voted aye) to amend the motion to add “provided data is in compliance with the matrix presented by the Superintendent tonight for a hybrid learning model” (moved by Ms. Higgins, seconded by Ms. Cannon).

Moved and seconded, the amended motion was voted.

The Board voted by roll call 8–0 with one abstention (Gina Cannon, Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Barb Higgins, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, David Parker voted aye; Maureen Redmond-Scura abstained) to approve the recommendation from the Instructional Committee to transition to a hybrid model as outlined at the August 6 meeting with grades K and 1, and grades 6 and 9 starting Monday October 5, and the remainder of the grades the week of October 12, provided data is in compliance with the matrix presented by the Superintendent tonight for a hybrid learning model (moved by Ms. Higgins, seconded by Mr. Parker).

Mr. Richards emphasized that mask wearing and social distancing must be enforced. Mr. Parker asked for ongoing details about the plan in the Superintendent’s weekly letter.

Agenda Item 11. Other business

Mr. Richards discussed the search for a permanent Superintendent. Mr. Croteau said he was planning to have a Board non-meeting in the near future.

Agenda Item 12. Proposed calendars of meetings

Ms. Cannon suggested renaming Columbus Day; Ms. Poinier said this could be added to the agenda for the next Joint City Council/School Board committee meeting, but this likely would not happen this year. Ms. Cannon made a motion to refer to October 12 as “Indigenous Peoples Day” instead of “Columbus Day” on the District’s calendar. Ms. Higgins seconded. Mr. Richards suggested putting this on a Board agenda to hear other community voices, suggesting his personal preference would be to postpone but not table the motion. Alice Richards asked if the Board could vote on the change at the October 5 Board meeting. Ms. Poinier suggested bringing the question to the Anti-Racism Advisory

Group to make a recommendation on the name of the day. Ms. Cannon withdrew her motion. Jim made a formal recommendation to put the question on the October 5 agenda.

Mr. Crush asked if future meetings would be public and/or remote. While it worked well at this meeting, it might be difficult to set up. Perhaps full Board meetings could be conducted this way, but not committee meetings. In response to questions about the setup logistics, Mr. Dunn indicated it required a minimum of 3 if not 4 people to run this every time. ConcordTV Executive Director Josh Hardy said this kind of meeting required quite a few people to set up, and concurred that monthly meetings would be worth that effort, but the Board might want to rethink and scale back the plan for committee meetings. Ms. Higgins noted that committee meetings did not usually include public comment, and asked if Board members would be comfortable with those meetings in the Board room. Mr. Crush noted that he had a greater degree of exposure working in a senior living community in Massachusetts, and concurred with just the monthly meeting like this, as it was impractical to have four people working for most of the day setting up each meeting. Mr. Richards declared that the monthly meeting would be held in public with concurrent remote streaming, and committee meetings without public comment would be in Board room. Mr. Crush asked whether health screenings and temperature-taking were occurring? Mr. Richards suggested setting up a screening with five or six basic questions, and taking a no-touch temperature with limit of 100.5 degrees.

Agenda Item 13. Public comment

Concord resident and parent Jonathan Lax thanked the Board for making plans to move to hybrid learning, with benefit of new guidance from the State, and said he hoped to remain in this low-risk state and have staffing to do it. Concord resident "Stacy" said she hoped remote classes would stay strong.

Agenda Item 14. Adjournment

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

The Board adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barb Higgins, *Secretary*

Linden Jackett, *Recorder*