

School Committee Update

September 2, 2012

Seating of the School Committees

The Concord-Carlisle Regional District School Committee welcomed new member, Melissa McMorrow of Carlisle. The 2012-13 Concord School Committee (CSC) members are: Maureen Spada, chair, Phil Benincasa, Fabian Fondriest, Pamela Gannon, and Jennifer Munn. The 2012-13 Concord-Carlisle School Committee (CCSC) members are: Fabian Fondriest, chair, Phil Benincasa, Pamela Gannon, Melissa McMorrow, Jennifer Munn, Louis Salemy, and Maureen Spada.

School Budgets

The School Committees received the annual budget data request letters from the Concord Finance Committee (FinComm). Ms. Munn will serve as the Concord FinComm observer for the School Committees. The school administration has begun the budget development process for the 2013-14 school budgets. The CCSC voted to establish a Special Education Stabilization Fund for the purpose of funding special education costs to alleviate the impact on the Concord-Carlisle High School (CCHS) operating budget.

Superintendent Evaluation

In June, the School Committees completed the 2011-12 performance review of Superintendent Diana Rigby. The review addressed the following categories: educational leadership, district management, professional development, equity, community, communication/public relations, and relationship with the school committee. Ms. Rigby received an overall evaluation of commendable, with particular mention of her focus on student learning, the approval of the high school building project, her management of difficult schools budgets, and her enthusiasm. In addition, Ms. Rigby was nominated and elected as a member of the Suburban School Superintendents, a national organization.

For 2012-13, a new educator evaluation system developed by the Massachusetts Department of Early and Secondary Education (DESE) will be implemented for CCHS teachers, principals, and the superintendent. Ms. McCausland, Director of Human Resources, reviewed the elements of the new evaluation standards and gave a presentation/orientation to the School Committees about the new evaluation process for superintendents.

District Goals

The Committees reviewed and approved the District Goals for 2012-13. The goals are in the areas of teaching and learning, human resources, and finance and operations. Specific actions and benchmarks address: student mastery of grade-level standards, student assessment and best practices in instruction and use of technology, students' social and emotional well-being, implementation of the new supervision and evaluation system, development and approval of FY2014 school budgets, support for the CCHS Building Committee to complete construction documents and maintain construction schedule, and a long-term solution for student transportation. The 2012-113 District Goals are posted on the district web site at www.concordpublicschools.net.

Collective Bargaining Agreements

The School Committees and administration concluded contract negotiations and approved agreements with the Concord Teachers' Association (CTA), CPS Building Service Workers, CCRSD Building Service Workers, and the Maintenance Workers unions. The CCSC also approved a section in the collective bargaining agreement between the Concord-Carlisle Teacher's Association (CCTA)

and CCRSD that addresses the new educator evaluation process and standards mandated by the State. A committee that will include a School Committee member is being set up to review specific items from the K-8 TELL Mass survey.

Enrollment

The School Committees reviewed enrollment information for 2012-2013. Enrollment has significantly increased at the elementary level this year with an additional 118 students in grades K-8. Current CPS enrollment is 1957 students and CCHS enrollment is 1209 students. Due to lack of space at Thoreau School, additional students from Concord Mews will be enrolled at Alcott School. Increased staffing is necessary at Alcott, Thoreau, and CMS to meet the needs of the increased enrollment. Ms. Rigby recommended that the School Committees form a sub-committee to study enrollment.

CCHS Building Project

The Regional School Committee continues to monitor the progress of the CCHS building project. On June 26, 2012, the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) sent a letter to the School Committee, school administration, and local officials indicating that funding for the CCHS building project has been suspended. The MSBA cited concerns about the scope of the project, the project budget, and the location of the alternate gym. The letter indicated that the district would need to submit specific information and documentation to restore funding for the project. On July 5, the Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committee and Building Committee met in a joint session and unanimously voted to fully comply with the MSBA requirements.

The CCHS Building Committee is treating this matter with the utmost seriousness and responded swiftly and thoughtfully. After clarification discussions directly with the MSBA, the district and project consultants submitted the required information in order to restore MSBA eligibility. At the CCHS Building Committee/Joint School Committee on August 14, the Design Development submittal was approved unanimously and the extensive permitting packing has been submitted to the Concord Planning Department. CCHS Building Project Forum #17 was held on August 22. More information is available at www.cchsbuilding.org. The Building Committee reaffirms that the project will meet the original cost projections, and the committee does not anticipate any delay in the overall project completion date due to resolving these issues.

Student Transportation

Ms. Spada updated the committees on the work of the School Committee-appointed Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). Summer work has focused on the identification of potential transportation facility sites. The committee developed a matrix for considering properties for possible use as a transportation depot and considered twenty properties in Concord, Acton, and Maynard. Further tasks will be to develop timelines, cost estimates, and sources of funding for a transportation facility in order to allow the School Committees to assess comparative costs and benefits. The TAC plans to present a final report to the School Committees in October. More information is available on the School Committee page of the district web site at www.concordpublicschools.net/school-committee.

Mr. Flaherty advised the Committees that school bus maintenance has been moved to the rented Billerica facility, the transportation staff have relocated to office space at Ripley, and the current yard at CCHS will be utilized for bus storage until construction starts on the high school property. Mr. Flaherty stated that there are challenges with creating a centralized parking facility for the fleet on school property. Both Sanborn and Alcott are located in water conservancy districts, and there are

space limitations at Thoreau. The Sanborn property was considered, but the environmental protective safeguards needed to satisfy regulations drove the cost estimate to over \$350,000. Mr. Flaherty recommended, and the School Committees approved, the issuance of a Request For Proposals (RFP) for the rental of a parking facility for the buses for 2012-13 with an option to renew for two successor one-year contracts. In the event a rental facility is not found or is deemed too costly, the buses will be parked on areas that are already paved at CCHS, Ripley, and Peabody.

Other Business/Reports

The Committees reviewed and approved updates to the Parent and Student Elementary Handbook, Concord Middle School Handbook, and Concord-Carlisle High School Handbook for 2012-13. The school principals, Ms. Young, Alcott, Ms. Clough, Thoreau, and Ms. Fernandes, Willard, Ms. Beattie, CMS, and Mr. Badalament, CCHS, presented their respective School Improvement Plans developed in coordination with the School Advisory Councils at each site. The principals discussed achievements and progress on the goals from 2011-12 and presented the goals for 2012-13.

Ms. Rigby advised the School Committees that the district has contracted with Research for Better Teaching (RBT, www.rbteach.com) to work with Thoreau School to improve the school culture for improved student learning. RBT is a nationally-recognized organization that focuses on sustainable school improvement and professional development, has won awards from the Massachusetts DESE, and is a Priority Partner for Turnaround in the Race to the Top initiative. A report will be presented to the Concord School Committee and the Thoreau community in January 2013.

The Regional School Committee approved a sister-school student exchange between Balkanabat School #17 in Turkmenistan and CCHS, and an exchange student from Italy to CCHS. The School Committees also approved grants for fiscal year 2012-2013: from the Concord-Carlisle Community Chest, \$13,400 to CPS for the Teen Buddy Program and to CCHS \$10,000 for Challenge Day; from the Cyrus Stow bequests to CCHS, \$875; from the Concord Integrated Preschool Enrichment Fund, \$625; and from Ms. Birdsall's class at Alcott School, video equipment valued at approximately \$450. We are very grateful for these generous donations.

For more information, please go to the School Committee page on the district web site, www.concordpublicschools.net/school-committee.