

CONCORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Concord – Carlisle School Committee
Concord School Committee
Ripley Building
September 13, 2016

Present: Wallace Johnston, Chair, CSC; CCSC
Heather Bout, Vice Chair; CSC; CCSC
Dan Conti, Vice Chair, CSC; CCSC
Bob Grom, CSC; CCSC

Absent: Johanna Boynton, CCSC; CSC

Present from Administration: Diana Rigby, Superintendent of Schools, CPS & CCRSD
John Flaherty, Deputy Superintendent of Finance & Operations, CPS & CCRSD

I. CALL TO ORDER

The session was called to order by Mr. Johnston at 6:30 PM. He noted that the meeting is being recorded.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

1. Diane Proctor, 57 Sudbury Rd., Concord, MA. Ms. Proctor stated that she was asked by the League of Women Voters of Concord and Carlisle to Chair the process of the selection of the Citizen at Large. She stated that she, Ms. Hayden and Ms. Cronin are coordinating the process and that they worked together to try and come up with a process that was both fair and transparent. She stated that as presently designed, it involves a 2-stage process: 1. They would ask members of the League of Women Voters (3-5) to serve on the League Selection Committee and 2. The League Selection Committee would accept and review Citizen at Large applications for the Superintendent Screening Committee. Ms. Proctor stated that applicants for the Selection Committee would be asked to submit their reasons for participating in writing and then 3-5 would be appointed. She stated that once the Selection Committee has been established, that committee would accept and review written citizen applications for the Screening Committee. She noted that by November 15th, the Selection Committee should be able to complete this process. Mr. Johnston thanked Ms. Proctor and noted that it sounds like a great process.

III. READING OF THE MINUTES

None.

IV. CHAIRS REPORT

Mr. Johnston stated that there would be a retirement party for Court Booth, Director of Adult & Community Education, on Thursday, September 22nd from 4:00-6:00PM at the Learning Commons at CCHS. He also stated that Tony Logalbo, Finance Director, is also retiring and there will a ceremony for him on Thursday, September 15th at 4:00-6:00 PM at the Trinitarian Church.

Community Coffee Dates. Mr. Johnston suggested that the SC review the tentative Community Coffee Dates and contact Ms. Bout with any conflicts/concerns as soon as possible. Ms. Bout noted that the SC would need to confirm the dates at the September 27th SC meeting. Ms. Rigby reminded the SC that the morning coffees would be held at Ripley and that the SC would need to decide where the evening coffees were to be held.

Mr. Johnston stated that Ms. Boynton was not present due to a death in her family and he wanted to send the School Committee's condolences to Ms. Boynton and to all of the Boynton family.

V. CORRESPONDENCE

A. None.

VI. RECOGNITIONS

A. Alcott: Anne McCormack. Ms. Rigby, on behalf of Principal Sharon Young, recognized Alcott school nurse Anne McCormack for her work getting all of the medical forms and information organized and out to the faculty prior to the start of school, noting that it was for over 470 students.

B. Willard: Custodial staff Carl Sweeney, Chet Spinney, Zeb Serra, Annette Maslowski and Administrative Assistant Bev Lucas. Ms. Rigby, on behalf of Principal Pat Fernandes, recognized the Willard custodial staff of Carl Sweeney, Chet Spinney, Zeb Serra and Annette Maslowski, for thoroughly cleaning the building from top to bottom, ensuring that Willard would be clean and shining for opening day. She also recognized Administrative Assistant Bev Lucas, for handling all of the summer mailings and managing the enrollment process for 24 new students.

C. Thoreau: Custodial staff Erminio Formato, Debra Frederick, Mario Pavao. Ms. Rigby, on behalf of Principal Angel Charles, recognized the custodial staff of Erminio Formato, Debra Frederick and Marion Pavao for ensuring that students returned to a beautiful, clean facility. She also thanked them for consistently going above and beyond to make Thoreau a healthy and inviting place to learn and grow.

D. CMS: Shawn Cecere and the IT folks, science dept. head Carrie Bjerke. Ms. Rigby, on behalf of Principal Drew Rosenshine, recognized the IT Staff and Shawn Cecere for his over the top efforts to get laptops distributed as well as addressing any technology issues that occurred in the first week. She also recognized Carrie Bjerke, the new Science Department Head, for endless hours setting up Amplify, the new online science curriculum, for teachers and students to use. Ms. Bout noted that she has already heard the excitement from the students regarding the science curriculum.

VII. REPORTS & ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

A. "Roles and Responsibilities of School Committee", Glenn Koocher, MASC. Mr. Koocher, Executive Director of MASC, spoke regarding the Roles and Responsibilities of School Committees. He reminded the SC that Massachusetts has the freest speech as well as the most unrestricted environment on it's elected officials right to speak of any state in the country. He noted that the SC has extraordinary authority to talk about whatever they would like. He noted that members of school committees do very difficult work and make very difficult decisions. He stated that the major responsibilities of the school committee are: hiring the Superintendent, setting policy for the District, setting the District budget, which includes their fiduciary responsibility. He urged the SC to listen respectfully to their constituents whenever they contact them but warned them that not everyone is objective when talking about their child, their neighborhood, etc. Mr. Koocher stated that one of the most important practices and characteristics of high performing districts is a strong Superintendent/School Committee collaboration. He urged the SC to probe in depth the candidates for the Superintendent position to get a sense of how much they appreciate the implications of collaboration, response of communication and of working with the SC. He noted that the best school committees understand how they can affect student achievement, by putting the right money in the right place and by sending the right messages around student achievement. He provided the SC with an updated list of hot topics regarding school committee operations and issues that appear at school committee meetings. He also noted that there have been interesting developments with regards to the open meeting law. Mr. Koocher noted the ballot questions coming up and stated that the SC can encourage the community about how, when and where to vote. He stated that they could not use the resources of the school district to influence the outcome of an election. He stated that as a private citizen, they are allowed to say anything they like, but as a school committee, they cannot use the resources of the district. Mr. Koocher stated that as the SC looks for the superintendent, the most serious candidates will watch the SC meetings and they will be researching the district. He noted that the candidates would be interviewing the SC as they were interviewing them and recommended careful reference checking.

Mr. Grom asked about SC members being involved in campaigns. Mr. Koocher stated that the SC member's right to participate in a political activity is unrestricted in their role as a citizen. He stated that they could, as a SC member, endorse a candidate or ballot question, but that they could not endorse in a public building or by using resources of the District.

Mr. Johnston questioned the changes that Mr. Koocher mentioned in the open meeting law. Mr. Koocher stated that the following question arose: during a confidential screening and interview, which is allowed to be done in Executive Session, may the questions for the screening and interview be developed in Executive Session? He noted that this is not allowed. He also stated that when presenting candidates, they should be seriously considered candidates. However, he stated that the open meeting law does not allow only one candidate to be considered.

B. Minuteman High School Bond Vote, Carrie Flood. Carrie Flood, Representative to Minuteman Vocational Tech School Committee, stated that by voting for the project through the town meeting process, the Minuteman region required that each of the 16 towns either approve or not disapprove. She noted that some towns chose not to vote at all and under state law, this was deemed as approving. She stated that one town, Belmont, voted no. Ms. Flood stated that due to this no vote, they had the opportunity to make a choice about whether to go back to town meeting and have all towns re-vote and put the onus on the town of Belmont. She stated that selectman from a few town peers met and the consensus was that if Belmont represented at town meeting, that the result would be the same. She stated that the law allows them to come to a ballot election, which is where they are now. She stated that all 16 towns would have the same question, on the same day, during the same hours. She noted that what is different from other special elections in town is that the state law stipulates that the polls be open for not less than 4, nor more than 8 hours. Ms. Flood stated that it was strongly advised from the Town Clerk to keep it separated from the state primary, so they decided on September 20th from 12:00-8:00 PM. She stated that they sent out a general mailing postcard with information about the polls, including times, but didn't include how to vote or show any support from any group. She reminded the SC that Minuteman Vocational Technical High School is part of the school system and belongs to the 16 towns, with Concord being part owner. She noted that the new high school has great opportunity for students and that they built it with the understanding that Minuteman would still be there for the kids who are best served in a vocational model. She noted that it may be a small portion of Concord students who are going there, but it's a choice for the student and parents. She stated that it's fair and reasonable to support the quality of the facility that supports the educational plan that benefits the kids for whom it is the right choice.

Ms. Bout stated that she feels that Minuteman has communicated this out very well and that she wants to support the students of Concord, whether CCHS is their option or Minuteman. Mr. Johnston thanked Ms. Flood for all of her service on this effort.

A motion was made by Mr. Conti, seconded by Ms. Bout, to support the new Minuteman Vocation Technical High School project and recommend passage of the ballot question at the September 20th election to be held at the Harvey Wheeler Center from noon to 8:00 PM. The motion was unanimously approved.

C. 2016 Parent Survey Results. Ms. Rigby spoke regarding the 2016 Parent Survey regarding school climate that parents participated in last spring. She noted that this year's results are very similar to last years. She stated that overall; the parents are highly satisfied with the learning experiences of their students. She stated there are areas that parents have continued to express some concern in over the last 2 years. Ms. Rigby stated that the expectation on the survey is that 90% or more of the parents would agree with the positive statement on the survey. She stated that they were pretty successful at the elementary schools, with parents responding positively to almost all of the statements. She noted the areas of concern from the questions were in communications as well as homework. In terms of open responses, Ms. Rigby stated that overall; the school and staff were wonderful. She noted that there were several comments regarding the need for more challenging, project based, and creative lessons. She stated that leadership teams are currently discussing this. She noted that there are several comments regarding support of the foreign language recommendation. Ms. Rigby also stated that more academic challenges for top students was also a theme and noted that they are discussing this with the admin team, principals and leadership teams. She noted that in contrast to last year, this year there were more comments asking the district to give no homework at the elementary level. She stated that homework is an issue that they need to look into and make sure the guidelines are being followed and the quality of homework is high.

Ms. Rigby noted that a theme for the middle schools were the conditions of the buildings, noting that this did not surprise them. She stated that there were comments around providing more personalized and differentiated instruction as well as enrichment for the top students. Ms. Rigby noted that they have been looking at that this year because it was a theme that was brought up the previous year as well. She stated that communication was also noted, from both the teachers and the main office. She noted that all of the work is taking place on this right now. Ms. Rigby

stated that the learning environment and overall satisfaction with the school was not at 90%, and that the principal would be sharing this with the leadership team and school site and would be discussing these topics.

Mr. Conti questioned the framing of the homework discussions for the administrators and teachers. Ms. Rigby stated that they start with why homework is assigned and what the benefit of the type of homework provided. She stated that it's about reading at home, practicing math facts and management skills with long term assignments. Ms. Rigby stated that they support the whole child development and that children have a lot of activities after school that they fully support, as well as family time and a healthy bedtime. She also noted that communication with parents is also important regarding what is expected out of the homework. Mr. Conti noted that there might be a confluence of the 2 issues of homework and communication that were reported on. Ms. Bout noted that she could see a definite progression in the homework given, but that the progression was actually never outlined.

Ms. Bout asked about the questions used in the survey and Ms. Rigby stated that they leave it up for the parents to define them for themselves, and that they are typical school climate survey questions. She did note that they would probably add/refine the questions now that the same ones have been used for 2 years. Mr. Johnston questioned the discrepancy between Alcott and the other elementary schools on the question about teachers assigning high-quality homework that helps my child learn. Ms. Rigby stated that she has asked Alcott to research this. Mr. Grom asked about the participation rates and Ms. Rigby stated that they are usually small. He also questioned if there was a behavior problem at the middle school and Ms. Rigby noted that this was just a perception.

Ms. Proctor questioned why there was such a low response and Ms. Rigby stated people who are happy don't generally respond to the survey and that around 10% is what they typically see.

D. 2016-17 Supt. Annual Plan/CPS District Goals. Ms. Rigby shared the 2016-17 Superintendent Annual Plan and the CPS District Goals. She stated that she is continuing the goal of promoting success for all students by nurturing and sustaining a culture of reflective practice, high expectations, continuous learning and professional growth for staff. She noted that she is increasing the opportunities for teacher voice in all areas of school leadership. She noted that there are over a dozen committees in which teachers are making decisions around teaching and learning. Ms. Rigby stated that the newest committee is the K8 Compensation for Other Services Provided, noting that this was part of the negotiations. Ms. Rigby stated that Concord Fellows is a program in which the colleagues, for the colleagues, provide professional development. She stated that they meet regularly as an admin team on leadership practices to improve consensus-building opportunities for faculty members. Ms. Rigby stated that at the elementary level, they are focusing on teacher leaders reviewing the elementary schedule and making recommendations on how to improve it, noting that they are interested in increasing the opportunity for students to participate in Spanish instruction. She stated that Ms. Herbert, an outside scheduling expert and representatives from the elementary schools would review the schedule and develop modifications for Spanish if the budget is approved for the Spanish teachers. Ms. Rigby noted that she would provide direct coaching for the interim middle school principal, Drew Rosenshine. Ms. Rigby asked for feedback on this goal and Ms. Bout stated that there are many committees and opportunities available and asked if it was possible to see how the use of these committees improves the schools and Ms. Rigby stated that this was possible.

Ms. Rigby reviewed the student-learning goal of K-8 students mastering critical end of year grade level standards. She stated that, in terms of statewide assessments, they don't provide any additional data other than letting the public know that they are implementing the programs that they say they are, and making sure that the high needs students are making progress. She stated that the expectations are that over 85% of students in grades 5 and 8 will score advanced or proficient in ELA and Math. She stated that they don't have specific results yet and noted that the high needs students have to make adequate growth, which is signified by a Cumulative Performance Index, or CPI in which they have to score a 75 or higher. She noted that a number of students in the schools have done that and those schools are Level 1. She noted that all of the schools should be Level 1, noting that CPS is Level 2 and the reason is because there is a group of high needs students at 2 schools that are not making adequate progress. She stated that they need to continue to focus on this group of students to make sure they are making adequate progress. Ms. Rigby stated that the key actions in place are to monitor the students' progress, noting that the elementary teachers meet every 6 weeks to monitor their students using curriculum-based assessments. She noted that this ensures that every student has mastered the skills needed for that grade level. Ms. Rigby stated that Concord teachers know on a daily basis where the students stand and that this is a hallmark of the District. She noted that the same practice is happening in the Middle School, but it's more challenging due to the schedule. Ms. Rigby stated that there are new earth science units at

the K5 level that will be much more engaging and that Amplify will be used at the middle school level which has a lot of simulations.

Ms. Rigby stated that Student Learning is the 1st District Goal and the 2nd is focused on providing students with personalized learning experiences that are personalized, engaging, standards based and include skills and strategies for careers, college and citizenship. She noted that there are middle school instructional coaches that focus on instructional strategies for high needs students. She stated that there is a lot of collaboration at the middle school level with the math, reading, language arts and technology specialists and the classroom teachers to provide more project based, differentiated lessons. Ms. Rigby noted that the Elementary Steering Committee would develop a plan to implement Spanish, noting that the process will span the whole year and would include the addition to the budget of 3 Spanish teachers. She noted that she fully supports the recommendation from the World Language Committee. Ms. Rigby stated that the middle school teachers are all using Google classroom and the students have access to Google apps to do collaborative work. She also stated that there are a number of students at the middle school that are not able to take Spanish or French, so they are encouraging the Leadership Team to research adding Latin as an elective so all students are able to take a language. Ms. Rigby stated that the STEAM Committee has partnered with CEF to develop the Innovation Lab at Ripley, noting how exciting it was.

Ms. Rigby stated that Goal 3 focused on positive school climate and social skills. She stated they are continuing to do the same work as last year, noting that there is a 10% decrease in behavior referrals at CMS. She stated that there is a lot of work done around conflict resolution strategies, students acting appropriately around each other and developing strong relationships with peers as well as adults.

Ms. Rigby stated that Goal 4 is related to supervision, evaluation and the 5 step cycle process, noting that consultant Mary Sterling is working with all the evaluators around improving the evaluation cycle to calibrate the cycle so everyone knows what is expected of them and when to turn in the work. Ms. Rigby stated that they also want more integrated reliability so teachers know what to expect, regardless what administrator is conducting the evaluation. Ms. Rigby stated that they are also working to align supervision and evaluation of student data to improve student learning.

Ms. Rigby stated that the next goal is related to budgets and to provide students and staff with resources and materials. She noted that they would begin speaking about the budget and the budget cycle in October meetings, noting that they are hoping to secure the support from the citizens at town meeting for the budget to include the additional faculty members for the language areas. Ms. Rigby noted that they are digitizing many admin functions in the business and human resources offices, which contribute to the sustainability goal. Ms. Rigby noted that they are excited to open parent portals by the end of the spring. She stated that they are improving parent communication through the parent portal, community coffees and principal coffees, monthly newsletters and blogs.

Ms. Hayden questioned moving forward with Spanish and Ms. Rigby stated that it would take a year for the teachers to make the recommendation, but that they would have to add it to the budget as a placeholder.

E. CMS Facilities Planning Committee. Ms. Bout stated that they are creating a CMS Feasibility Committee and are looking for members of the community who would like to be a part of it. She stated that the Committee would eventually report to the SC on their findings of the feasibility study in terms of: repairs, renovations and rejuvenations of the existing buildings and options for building new. She noted that they are looking for 2 to 3 community members who would span expertise in the areas of architecture, school facilities, construction project management, sustainability planning and familiarity with MSBA regulations and expectations. She stated that anyone who is interested in being on the Committee should email the CSC at concordschoolcommittee@concordps.org with his/her interests and qualifications. Ms. Bout noted that it could be a 2-year commitment. Mr. Flaherty stated that he would work with Ms. Bout on selecting the members.

F. Massachusetts Authorization of Additional Charter Schools and Charter School Expansion, Question #2. Mr. Johnston stated that he was approached by the CTA on the topic of lifting the Cap on Commonwealth Charter Schools. He stated that there are currently about 100 Districts in the State that have joined in opposition of lifting the cap on charter schools. Mr. Grom stated that he has read a lot about the issue and he would vote in favor of Concord signing the resolution to cap charter schools in the state. Mr. Conti agreed with Mr. Grom in support of the resolution due to

financial and philosophical reasons. Ms. Bout noted that she sees both sides, but stated that charter school expansion would widen the already existing gap, and therefore she would support the resolution.

A motion was made by Mr. Conti, seconded by Ms. Bout, to support the resolution against lifting the cap as written on the Commonwealth Charter Schools. The motion was unanimously approved.

G. Superintendent Search. Ms. Bout stated that the PTG presidents asked for more detail in terms of what information to send out when soliciting for the parent representatives to the Screening Committee. Ms. Bout shared the verbiage she had worked on, noting that the wording could be used for other organizations. Mr. Grom recommended making potential representatives aware of all of the meeting dates by providing the Screening Committee Schedule. Mr. Conti noted how impressed he was with the process that the League of Women Voters had provided earlier in the meeting and asked if it would be possible for the PTG to consult with them. Ms. Proctor stated that it would be an honor.

VIII. ACTION ITEMS

None.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

A. Transportation. Mr. Flaherty stated that they have ordered the electric bus. He also stated that the depot is under construction at Knox Trail and is expected to come online in late June.

X. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Ms. Rigby stated that the Official Accountability PARCC results will be available September 27th and in October, at both the CPS and CCRSD school committee meetings, she and Ms. Herbert will give a report on the results. Ms. Rigby stated that CPS currently has 14 more students than last year, for a total of 2094 students; Alcott decreased by 4; Thoreau increased by 2; Willard decreased by 18; CMS increased by 42. She stated that they are very pleased at class sizes and that K5 student to teacher ratio is 19:1 and the average class size at CMS is 20-22 students. She noted that the range is from 12-27 at CMS and that they are working on capping the class size at 25 students. Ms. Rigby stated that major capital projects include: installation of the double classroom modular at the Sanborn building, a new Integrated Preschool playground, asbestos abatement projects at the Ripley building and significant improvements at the Ripley and Willard septic systems. She noted that the projects underway include: acoustical ceiling tiles at the Peabody gym, Knox Trail Administration building for the Transportation and Maintenance departments, the CMS Facilities Study and the Innovation/STEAM Lab at Ripley. Ms. Rigby reminded everyone about the CPS Back to School Nights: Sept. 13th – Willard grades 1&2, Alcott grades 3-5; Sept. 14th - Alcott grades K-2 and Thoreau; Sept. 21st – Willard grades 3-5; Sept. 22nd – Peabody and Sept. 29th – Sanborn. Ms. Rigby stated that she is pleased that the IT department has completed the automation of the student registration, verification and health forms. She noted that all student health information for CMS students would all be collected online through the Aspen parent portal. She stated that next spring, they would verify the CMS information and elementary parents would receive parent portal accounts.

Ms. Bout stated that the deadline for anyone interested in being on the CMS Facilities Planning Committee would be October 4th.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Conti, seconded by Mr. Grom, to adjourn the meeting. The motion was unanimously approved and the meeting adjourned at 8:53 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin E. Higgins

Approved: 10/11/16

Abbreviations:

CASE	Cooperative Association for Special Education
CSC	Concord School Committee
CCSC	Concord-Carlisle Regional District School Committee
CPA	Community Preservation Act
CPC	Community Preservation Committee
CPS	Concord Public Schools
CCRSD	Concord-Carlisle Regional School District
CCHS	Concord-Carlisle High School
CHPS	The Collaborative for High Performance Schools
CSEC	Comprehensive Sustainable Energy Committee
CPW	Concord Public Works
CTA	Concord Teachers Association
DESE	Department of Elementary & Secondary Education
ELA	English Language Arts
FAAC	Financial Audit Advisory Committee
FINCOM	Finance Committee
MASC	Massachusetts Association of School Committees
MIAA	Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association
NEASC	New England Association of Schools and Colleges
OPEB	Other Post-Employment Benefits
RTI	Response to Intervention
SEPAC	Special Education Advisory Council
YRBS	Youth Risk Behavior Survey