

Date of Meeting Reported On: 1/18/18

Meeting: SC Budget Subcommittee

Present: Bob Grom, Wally, Laurie Hunter, June Rzepczynski, John Flaherty, John Hicklin, Melissa McMorrow, Dean Banfield.

Absent: Linda Miller

Wally chaired the meeting. Minutes for the 1/10/18 meeting were approved.

**Why do Concord/CCHS "rankings" vary so much between sources?** - The published criteria and calculation methods had been downloaded and investigated for Boston Magazine (CCHS ranking #2) and US News & World Report (CCHS = ~#high-40s). Boston Magazine's was a paragraph which was shared as a handout. USNews & World Report's was about 2" thick, so printout was just referenced.

The primary difference in CCHS's ranking is definitely the high importance of the number of AP tests taken by seniors for the USNWR rankings. USNews rankings consider a College Readiness Index (CRI) to be "# of Senior Students taking at least 1 AP test" divided by "#Students in the senior class", with bonuses for seniors who take 5 AP tests. They do not place any value on the International Baccalaureate test favored by private schools or on CCHS honors classes. They also don't care whether the child passes the AP test or not, while Boston Mag. checks how many who take the test get a score of 3 or higher.

CCHS doesn't have an official History/Civics AP test prep path, though our kids cover enough of the material they would probably do fine on those AP tests. Many of our students do take the English AP test, but most of our AP prep effort is set up along the STEM paths. This is partly because if AP prep paths were offered in every subject, the kids might feel pressured to try to take **all** the AP classes offered (and they are stressed enough), and partly because higher level classes in some departments are set up to prepare our grads for success in the seminar-style, class-participation-heavy learning they will probably encounter in college. Also, most CCHS students take an AP test immediately after they have finished the class for it, often in Junior or even sophomore year, so USNEWS doesn't count those tests in its rankings.

Some pointed out that most colleges don't even count the "Passing the AP test" result - which is what the "memorize this brick-sized tome of facts so you can do well on the AP test" method of learning provides - to allow kids to skip the equivalent college level class. Some do allow general college credits though, which might allow a student to graduate early. People feel that most colleges know about our system - that our honors classes are very good and that our kids are well-prepared for college - and look at that for admissions.

There was discussion that the CCHS educational approach to AP offerings should be explicitly explained to citizens. We should use Naviance data to see if we can quantify that our kids are being accepted at comparable rates to the best schools as our benchmark towns. We should also see if there is a way to quantify anecdotal stories about how freshman year is easier for many of our grads than for grads from other systems - perhaps use Naviance data for our town and see if we can get general data for other towns, perhaps try to find out what percentage of CCHS grads are still in college 1 year after graduation vs. other towns.

**What should go in the final report?** - A first draft proposed to include the following items where we have found differences and/or there is citizen interest:

Healthcare, OPEB, Transportation, Teaching technology, average teaching time/professional, AP courses offered, Boston Magazine ranking

Class load of CCHS faculty - cost to town vs. benefit to students

AP offerings approach

College readiness level - perhaps adjust USNews rankings to count our honors-level classes as AP prep and show how that would affect our ranking?

Academic program differences here - Q5, Rivers and Revolutions, Co-curricular

Advanced Extracurricular - Radio Station, Weather club, Theater

**Transportation** - Town budgets on websites often have a page for Transportation. Using these as a printed "footnote" explanation in our report of how each town accounts for each type of transportation (SPED, extracurricular, athletics) in their budget (and what they report data to DESE) will be helpful. A committee member will try to combine the DESE transportation data examined earlier with these web pages to put together a narrative/summary of this item for a final report.

**OPEB** - This is one of the big differences in cost per student between us and some towns - LS is paying 15% of what we're paying, which equals about \$500/student. It's difficult to get this number for towns because it's mixed in the town budgets, but perhaps we can get it from a different database for regional districts and compare only those? Perhaps for towns, we could use the amount in the actual retirement Trust Funds and compare that instead of the amount towns are paying each year? Since we are choosing to fully fund this obligation, we have less money available for our operating budget. More research needed on best way to present.

One member pointed out that different towns are going through different budgetary issues right now, some of which we have already been through. A handout was provided showing that Winchester is having to deal with a 17.2% increase in student enrollment over the last 10 years due to denser construction. They are dealing with large class sizes in their schools, and the near prospect of many more 40B projects, because they are not near the state goal of 10% of housing stock being "low income". In addition, Belmont is about to have to rebuild all of its schools, AB's schools are also getting old, and LS is going to have to deal with its terrible technology infrastructure (or not). Someone will try to see if there is a way to point out where each town is in the cost/issue cycle and how that may be affecting the cost/per student differences.

**Teacher Contracts/Medical payments** - Member will present at next meeting.

The focus of the next meeting will again be on what and how to present the researched benchmarking information and looking at drafts of some items.

Next meeting time/location will be decided via email.