

JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Concord – Carlisle School Committee  
Concord School Committee  
Ripley Building  
November 13, 2018

Present: Johanna Boynton, Chair, CSC; CCSC  
Wallace Johnston, Vice Chair, CSC; CCSC  
Robert Grom, Chair, CCSC; CSC  
Mary Storrs, Vice Chair, CCSC  
Heather Bout, CSC; CCSC  
Courtland Booth, CSC; CCSC  
Christine Lear, CCSC

Present from Administration: Dr. Laurie Hunter, Superintendent of Schools, CPS & CCRSD  
Jared Stanton, Director of Finance & Operations, CPS & CCRSD

**CONCORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Boynton called the CSC meeting to order at 5:30 PM. A motion was made by Ms. Bout, seconded by Mr. Grom, for the Concord School Committee to enter into Executive Session under Purpose 3 of the Open Meeting Law: To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and return to Open Session at approximately 6:30 PM. The motion passed by roll call: Booth, aye; Bout, aye; Grom, aye; Boynton, aye; Johnston, aye.

At 6:34 PM, Ms. Boynton called the CSC back to order and noted that the meeting was being recorded.

**II. PUBLIC COMMENT**

1. Dean Banfield, 73 Walden Terrace, Concord, MA. Mr. Banfield stated that he was Chair of the Finance Guidelines Subcommittee and was speaking on behalf of the subcommittee. He spoke about fiscal sustainability as a guiding principal for how the Town financially moves from one year to the next, noting that they formed a subcommittee, The Fiscal Sustainability Working Group. He stated that the working group has met for over a year and has been looking into macro indicators of finance to see how the tax burdens are stacking up against things that people face in their financial lives, such as the consumer price index, interest rates and wage indicators. He shared a chart of wage growth, compensation growth, bearing interest rates and growth of the consumer price index, noting that the median tax bill was outstripping these tremendously. He stated that they need to be conservative in the view that the tax bill needs to be reigned in to a degree if they are to maintain a fiscally sustainable policy for the Town. He stated that they are working on a sustainability indicator to guide them in their process.

**III. REPORTS FOR DISCUSSION**

A. CMS Capital Projects. Ms. Bout stated that they have not heard from MSBA regarding whether or not CMS is invited into their funding process this year. She stated that, regardless of this, they are at least 4 to 5 years out from a new building, noting that they need to maintain the current buildings enough to create a fulfilling middle school experience for students. She shared lists of required actions, recommended actions and optional actions for both middle school buildings, noting that the required actions are for things that have to be dealt with if they were to stay in the buildings for a long period of time, but are not a list of things that have to be done to be within code. She stated that the items that need to be dealt with in the shorter term have been on their radar. She stated that Dr. Hunter and Mr. Stanton will discuss the items further and then the SC will decide what items to add to a warrant article that is due in December. Dr. Hunter noted that they need to create as an enjoyable learning environment as possible. Ms. Boynton noted that Brian Schlegel has worked hard on what the needs of the buildings are. Mr. Johnston questioned if there were items that they need to have contingencies for to cover costs, noting that it's not a cut and dry list. Dr. Hunter and Ms. Bout agreed. Dr. Hunter stated that they should hear from MSBA by December 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Booth questioned the reconfiguration and Dr. Hunter stated that Mr. Cameron has been looking into the schedule and has

identified needs, some of which have already been addressed. She stated that parking is the last piece of the reconfiguration that needs to be identified.

**B. CPS FY20 Budget:**

1. Superintendent's FY20 CPS Recommended Line Item Budget, 2. Superintendent's FY20 CPS Recommended Line Item Budget by DESE 1000 Function, 3. Superintendent's FY20 CPS Recommended Line Item Budget by DESE 100 Function. Mr. Stanton stated that the budget process was a collaborative effort and shared the methods of zero-based budgeting, noting that they were able to consolidate the budget lines. He stated that the FY20 CPS recommended budget is \$39,390,163, noting that this is a 2.99% higher budget than the FY19 SC approved budget. He reviewed the largest cost drivers, including: increases in contract services, employee separation incentive costs, aide salaries, substitute salaries, teacher salaries, supplies/materials, clerical salaries and maintenance/custodial salaries. He then reviewed cost savings, including: legal fees, non-union and support staff salaries, tutors and special education tuitions. Mr. Stanton reviewed the 8 locations and their specific expenses within the CPS budget, including: preschool, district wide kindergarten, district wide elementary, Alcott, Thoreau, Willard, CMS and district wide. He explained how different expenses were allocated to each location, noting that several of the increases were due to expenses being moved to the correct accounts and not necessarily actual increases. He reviewed the percent budget increases or decreases at each location, explaining the reason for each. Dr. Hunter noted that this is a cleanup year due to the zero based budgeting. Ms. Bout thanked Mr. Stanton for all of his work on the budget, noting how clear and concise it is. Ms. Bout noted that much of the increase was due to the contractual double step salary increase.

**CONCORD-CARLISLE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT** *(Ms. Storrs and Ms. Lear joined the meeting)*

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

At 7:46 PM, Mr. Grom called the CCSC to order, noting that they are being recorded.

**II. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**III. RECOGNITIONS** – Nanae Visit. Dr. Hunter shared a video that David Nurenberg had taken of the dedication of the plaque in CCHS to the students of Nanae. Ms. Bout noted that the relationship between Concord and Nanae has deep roots and is now in its 21<sup>st</sup> year. She stated that there were 8 students that visited from Nanae, noting how much the CCHS students learned from them. Ms. Bout stated that there were 7 adults from Nanae that attended an all school assembly at Alcott, noting all of the connections made. She stated that the principal from Nanae commented that this was one of the most amazing experiences of his life, noting that he sends his thanks. Dr. Hunter thanked Ms. Bout for translating at the Alcott assembly and shared moments of connections for the students and visitors at the assembly.

**IV. READING OF THE MINUTES**

A. Open Session – Jt. Meeting – 10/9/18 and 10/23/18. A motion was made by Ms. Storrs, seconded by Ms. Bout, to approve the 10/9/18 and 10/23/18 joint minute meetings. The motion was unanimously approved.

**V. CHAIRS & LIAISONS REPORT**

Ms. Lear stated that Adult Education had their program last Wednesday night, noting that 110 people were in attendance and that it was a great program. She stated that they would be having a follow up meeting to continue the discussions on Wednesday night, November 14<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Bout and Mr. Booth both noted how great the program was.

Mr. Johnston stated that the FAC (Financial Advisory Committee) met this morning and noted that there was a change in the law regarding OPEB trusteeship. He stated that there would be a warrant article to align it with current Mass law, noting that they are looking at creating an investment committee to create an investment policy for the regional OPEB trust as well as the Town's OPEB trust.

Ms. Bout stated that the Budget Subcommittee met and that Mr. Stanton provided an in-depth view of the budget, noting that it provided very good insight.

Mr. Grom stated that he attended the last EDCO SC member round table meeting, noting that they discussed virtual school days.

## **VI. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Hunter stated that two new programs opened at CMS and Thoreau, which focused on RTI and Special Education, noting that many students' needs will be better supported through these programs. She stated that they have screened all of the freshman class at CCHS for RTI support in reading, math and social/emotional needs. She stated that they have identified students with reading deficits and are building a plan to move forward with interventions to help the students succeed, noting that the LLI program will expand from the elementary and middle school levels to CCHS. Dr. Hunter stated that she's been working with the administrative team to look into the educator evaluation process. She noted that the CTA and leadership team would be meeting to review the current language in the contract and discuss possible changes. Dr. Hunter stated that, in terms of student wellness, the PEAR screening tool was implemented at CCHS, noting that they are currently reviewing it. She also noted that the 2018 Youth Risk Behavior Survey results are provided on the district web page, noting that the most notable outcomes are relative to student stress as well as an increase to those reporting to vape.

Dr. Hunter stated that the School Safety Committee met on November 8th and set priorities for the year. She noted that they are looking at some app-based tools for staff to use to communicate in the case of an event. She stated that the temporary STEAM lab is up and running. She stated that she met with the CCHS Student Superintendent Advisory Council and that they offered positive feedback on their learning experiences. Dr. Hunter stated, in terms of Cultural Proficiency, that they've identified 2 keynote speakers for January and May. She stated that the SC email subscriber list is up to over 200 subscriptions. Dr. Hunter stated that she attended the CCHS choral concert and took part in the panel at the fall MASS/MASC conference. She stated that she attended a group led by Concord Sustainability Director, Kate Hanley today and noted that she continues to meet with Carlisle Superintendent, Jim O'Shea to continue to stay connected.

## **VII. CORRESPONDENCE**

Mr. Grom stated that he received an email from a parent with ideas regarding virtual school days.

## **VIII. REPORTS FOR DISCUSSION**

A. CCRSD FY20 Budget: 1. Superintendent's FY20 CCHS Recommended Line Item Budget. 2. Superintendent's FY20 CCHS Recommended Line Item Budget by DESE 100 Function. 3. Superintendent's FY20 CCHS Recommended Line Item Budget by DESE 1000 Function. Mr. Stanton stated that the CPS budget was by location and that the regional budget was by program area. He then reviewed the zero based budgeting process. He stated that the FY20 CCHS recommended budget was \$34,909,657, noting that is was 3.44% higher than FY19 SC approved budget. He reviewed the biggest cost drivers to the budget, including: contract services, employee separation costs, insurance increases, OPEB funding, athletic coach salaries, support staff salaries, teacher salaries and software/hardware, for a total of \$1.5 million. Mr. Stanton reviewed \$522,385 in cost savings, including reductions in: debt, transportation salaries, tutors and special education tuitions.

Mr. Stanton stated in the FY20's budget, the OPEB arc was fully funded with an increase of \$185,368 from the FY19's funded amount. He stated that Moody's has stated that the district has one of the highest OPEB balances of any school district in the state, but due to the fact that reserves are low and E&D is continually being used as a revenue source, having a low E&D fund balance has more of a negative impact on the bond rating than having a high OPEB balance. He noted that Moody's stated that increasing the E&D balance or other reserve balances should be the focus and that the district is on their watch list for the next 18-24 months.

Mr. Stanton reviewed the projected early retirement incentive savings, the health insurance costs for active and retired employees and debt service. He then reviewed projected revenue, of \$3,634,494, including: Chapter 70 and Chapter 71 transportation, an interest increase and miscellaneous revenue. He stated that the Governor's budget doesn't come out until January, noting that the numbers of very preliminary. Mr. Stanton reviewed assessments and shared 3 different scenarios: 1) Reducing E&D, fully funding the arc and fully funding the purchase of the laptops 2) Level funding of E&D, reducing OPEB back to FY19's contribution amount and fully funding the purchase of the laptops and 3) Funding E&D of \$525,000, reducing OPEB contribution by ½ and fully funding the purchase of the laptops. He stated that he is able to provide numbers for any different scenario the SC would like to see.

Ian Rhames, Assistant Business Manager, shared information regarding the laptop program, including options for purchasing outright, leasing and deferred purchase. He noted that purchasing would have the greatest impact in budgeting in the FY20 budget and that leasing would be less impactful. He noted that the total cost of the program would be lower if the laptops were purchased versus if they were leased or deferred purchase. Dr. Hunter noted that there is cost savings over time with the students using laptops, noting that the school has more control when they provide the laptops vs. students using their own. She also noted the success of the program at CMS. Ms. Storrs noted her concern for purchasing the laptops with all of the updates in technology that will occur over the next 10 years and questioned if Chrome-books were a better option. Dr. Hunter stated that Apples are lasting a solid 6 years and provide a lot of functionality inherent in the operating system. Mr. Johnston recommended the possibility of leasing some and purchasing some.

Dr. Hunter stated that the budget would need to be voted in December, noting that Concord is setting its final guideline on November 29<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Johnston stated that they do not want to lose their AAA rating and that they should be on a 2 year track to reduce E&D. The SC discussed the different scenarios Mr. Stanton had presented regarding E&D, OPEB and laptops, and agreed that E&D was top priority. Ms. Storrs noted that this year would be the year to be aggressive with E&D. Mr. Johnston noted that if the District has a rating decrease, it might affect the Towns of Concord and Carlisle's ratings. Mr. Stanton stated that to get to the guideline number of 4.27%, it would be about \$266,000 (after the full purchase of laptops, E&D at \$350,000 and fully funding the arc). Dr. Hunter noted that her recommended budget included Scenario 1 (reducing E&D, fully funding the arc and fully funding the purchase of the laptops).

B. Virtual School Days Proposal. Dr. Hunter stated that this conversation began last winter after 7 cancellations due to snow, noting that other districts are also pursuing similar options. She stated that she's received a lot of input from different groups, noting that a proposal would have to be approved by the state. She stated that it could be put in place whenever the time is right, noting that it doesn't need to be rushed prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> snow. Dr. Hunter reviewed ideas from discussions around elementary school options, including: reading and a choice of activities to be completed within a certain window of time, for flexibility. She stated that, in regards to secondary (middle/high school) students, either universal assignments or 30-minute assignments from each course, noting there would have to be a window of time for completion for flexibility. Ms. Bout questioned what other districts use and Dr. Hunter stated that other districts that have started using a universal assignment option. She stated that a PreK-12 professional development day is also under consideration. She stated that they discussed not having all of the snow days be virtual, but having a mix of virtual and regular snow days. Ms. Boynton suggested piloting 1 or 2 virtual days on certain snow days (i.e. 3<sup>rd</sup>/5<sup>th</sup>) with prepared universal assignments. Ms. Storrs suggested piloting this for both districts and Ms. Lear noted that Carlisle is ready to pilot virtual days. Ms. Lear also noted that there might be no power on some snow days, and suggested that the pilot happen early on. Dr. Hunter noted that they haven't solicited any feedback from the parent community yet.

## **IX. OLD BUSINESS**

A. CCHS Campus Project Updates. Mr. Stanton stated that the field drainage project is ready to go and that they are waiting for a break in the weather to begin the project. He stated that the curb modifications for the access to the nurses room is underway and should take approximately 2 weeks for the survey and design. He stated that they are waiting for a response to a proposal for the design specs for moving of the ductwork for the spray booth and the work is expected to cost \$10,000-\$15,000. Mr. Stanton stated that everything is running smoothly with Gale Associates and that they would be attending the campus oversight committee meeting on November 20<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 PM.

## **X. NEW BUSINESS**

A. Q5 Update. Dr. Hunter stated that, based on the feedback from Q5, they decided to go to a 1 week Q5 model. She stated that with the 4-day program, they are hoping to move the professional day from March back to the end of the year.

A motion was made by Mr. Johnston, for CCSC, seconded by Ms. Bout, for CCSC, to move the March professional day to the end of Q5 for CCRSD. The motion was unanimously approved.

B. March Professional Day. *Discussed with the Q5 update above.*

## **XI. ACTION ITEMS**

A. Vote to accept Thoreau PTG gift to the Thoreau School. A motion was made by Mr. Johnston, seconded by Ms. Bout, that the CSC accept a wrap around tree bench from the Thoreau PTG in honor of Karen Pettyjohn, who retired as the school's librarian last year. The motion was unanimously approved, with praise for Ms. Pettyjohn's years of service.

B. Vote to accept CEF Grant for CCHS writing symposium. A motion was made by Mr. Johnston, seconded by Ms. Bout, to accept a CEF grant for the CCHS writing symposium. The motion was unanimously approved.

C. Vote to approve the CMS Grade 8 trip to DC in the spring. A motion was made by Mr. Johnston, seconded by Ms. Bout, to approve the CMS Grade 8 trip to DC in the spring. The motion was unanimously approved.

## **XII. ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Ms. Bout, for both CSC and CCSC, seconded by Ms. Boynton, for both CSC and CCSC, to adjourn the meeting. The motion was unanimously approved and the meeting adjourned at 10:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin E. Higgins

Approved: 11/27/18

### Abbreviations:

ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union
CASE	Cooperative Association for Special Education
CEF	Concord Education Fund
CSC	Concord School Committee
CCSC	Concord-Carlisle Regional District School Committee
CMLP	Concord Municipal Light Plant
CPA	Community Preservation Act
CPC	Community Preservation Committee
CPS	Concord Public Schools
CCRS	Concord-Carlisle Regional School District
CCACE	Concord-Carlisle Adult & Community Education
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
EOYR	End of the Year
FAAC	Financial Audit Advisory Committee
FINCOM	Finance Committee
FCCPF	Friends of Concord Carlisle Playing Fields
GASB	Governmental Accounting Standards Firm
LLI	Leveled Literacy Intervention
MAAB	Massachusetts Architectural Access Board
MASC	Massachusetts Association of School Committees
MIAA	Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association
NEASC	New England Association of Schools and Colleges
NESDEC	The New England School Development Council
NFPA	National Fire Protection Association

OPEB	Other Post-Employment Benefits
PEG	Public Education Government
RTI	Response to Intervention
SEPAC	Special Education Parent Advisory Council
SOI	Statement of Interest
SPED	Special Education
SWOT	Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats
YRBS	Youth Risk Behavior Survey