

**CONCORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

Concord School Committee  
Ripley Building  
September 9, 2014

Present:	Jennifer Munn, Chair, CCSC; CSC Kathleen Snook, Chair, CSC; CCSC Phil Benincasa, Vice Chair, CSC; CCSC Johanna Boynton, Vice Chair, CCSC; CSC Wallace Johnson, CSC; CCSC
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 Ms. Snook for CSC at 6:30 PM. Ms. Snook noted that the meeting is being recorded.

**II. Citizen Comments**

As a follow-up from their August meeting, the Committee is doing a trial of having Citizen Comments at the start of the meeting.

1. Paul Horwitz, 173 Hayward Mill Road, Concord. Mr. Horwitz stated that he would respectfully suggest that the School Committee open up citizens comments for the public during the middle of the meeting rather than at the beginning or the end. He stated that it would be more useful for the citizens to provide feedback after the School Committee has had a chance to discuss topics rather than before. Also commented on communication between the public and the school committee. Mr. Horwitz stated that he would like the School Committee to think about a forum where the public can have a conversation with the school committee with no time restraint.

2. Robert Grom, 141 Mildred Circle, Concord. Mr. Grom commented on the meeting from a couple of weeks ago and how the comments made by Paul Horwitz, concerning the establishment of committees dealing with various school issues was a very good one. Mr. Grom totally agrees with Mr. Horwitz on the quantity and quality of work that a well-chosen committee can achieve in the town of Concord. Also he stated that the decision to continue community coffees is an excellent one. They have been helpful and have worked out extremely well. Mr. Grom commented that it was brought to his attention from a good source that there are probably about 200-400 residents in Concord that are not citizens. He feels that referring to "citizens comments" may be interpreted as being only available to U.S.

Citizens. Mr. Grom stated that it should be looked into and suggested the term “public comments” would be a more appropriate term. Mr. Grom suggests the School Committee should publish the released executive session minutes on the website.

### **III. Reading of the Minutes**

None

### **IV. Chairs Report**

Ms. Snook stated that the next School Community Coffee is scheduled for September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014 from 11:30am to 1:00pm located at the Ripley building. The Committee has invited Ms. Rigby to start the coffee by speaking about public record requests.

Ms. Munn stated that they had the first PTG presidents meeting on Monday. They asked about whether they would like to adopt a School Committee member. The PTG presidents uniformly expressed an interest in having School Committee members come out prior to town meeting to walk through the budget. Since Monday's meeting, Alcott requested a School Committee member come to their meeting on October 15<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am, and then on March 18<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am, they would like someone to come to go over budget. Ms. Munn stated that she would let everyone know once she has heard back from the Willard, CMS, the high school and Thoreau. Members can volunteer through the Chairs.

Ms. Snook stated that Ms. Rigby, Mr. Flaherty, and the School Committee are beginning to work on the budget. There will be a FinCom budget meeting on October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014 where the initial response to questions will be addressed.

### **V. Correspondence**

A. DESE-CPS Coordinated Program Review. Ms. Rigby stated that they have received the final letter from the department of Elementary and Secondary Education regarding the coordinative program review for Special Education at CPS. Ms. Rigby is happy to report that out of more than 70 items they had 1 item that was partially implemented. She recognized and congratulated the principals and Ms. Jessica Murphy and all school site staff for making sure that we were compliant with the state. The item that was partially implemented as had been mentioned in previous reports was the Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC). Every year the director solicits requests from parents to organize a council and she has not had responses until this year. Ms. Mary Tambor from Willard and Ms. Becky Robichaud from Alcott have stepped up to lead this council. They will co-chair the parent advisory council. The District is now 100% compliant in the Special Education Department at the Elementary level.

B. Town Governance Report. Ms. Rigby indicated that the Committee received the Town Governance Study Committee's final report.

C. Ms. Munn announced that the letter has been sent from the School Committee to the town selectman regarding the schedule for town meeting requesting that the school budget be not heard on Sunday afternoon.

D. Ms. Snook stated that in the period July 24<sup>th</sup> – August 26th, the District received one Your Voice Matters submission that had to do with a request for a contract. The Committees received two emails; one from a volunteer looking for ways to help in the schools and the other about transportation discussions. From August 26<sup>th</sup> – September 9<sup>th</sup>, the District had received two Your Voice Matters submissions; one addressing forming sub-committees and public record requests, and the other concern that the agenda for today's meeting was not posted to our website, which was an oversight due to switching secretaries. Four emails to the Committees were also received; one concerning high school start times and requesting the school day to start later, one announcing a band concert at the high school, a third addressing public record requests which we will discuss at the September 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting and at the School Committee community coffee, and the fourth from the Alcott PTG asking us to participate in the October and March meetings.

## **VI. Recognitions**

Ms. Rigby stated recognition for 700 employees of our school Districts for the fabulous first week of school. She congratulated everyone from the cafeteria to transportation, tutors, teachers, administrators and Ripley staff. Ms. Rigby stated it was a very smooth beginning and we were able to satisfy 3,350 students with smiles on their faces but more importantly that their parents were happy.

Mr. Benincasa wanted to recognize his colleagues, Ms. Snook and Ms. Boynton, for the job that they did last night with the board of selectman with regard to transportation. He felt the presentation was crystal clear, concise and to the point.

## **VII. Reports & Issues for Discussion**

None

## **VIII. Action Items**

A. Vote to approve Alcott PTG donation of GAGA Pit. Ms. Boynton moved and Mr. Benincasa seconded a motion that the Concord School Committee vote to approve the Alcott PTG donation of the GAGA Pit as presented in the provided memo. The motion was unanimously approved.

B. Vote to approve CMS Merrowvista trip. Mr. Benincasa moved and Mr. Johnston seconded a motion that the Concord School Committee vote to approve the CMS Merrowvista trip as presented in the provided memo. The motion was unanimously approved.

## **IX. Old Business**

A. Transportation update.

Ms. Snook commented about how wonderful it is that there is a long-term solution in sight. She indicated that the Committee had discussed the state of the transportation operations now and plans for the future with the Concord Board of Selectmen last evening. We need to identify and have in place a bridge for parking and maintenance from July 2015 – July 2016.

Ms. Boynton stated that all is moving ahead regarding the property. There will be another meeting with Acton on September 22<sup>nd</sup> with their board of selectman. Ms. Boynton will be able to report about that meeting at the School Committee meeting on September 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Mr. Flaherty indicated that he is focused on the short-term plan from now through July 2016 when we expect a long-term solution in place. We have assurances from the Town for maintenance if we cannot locate a site, but do not have a location for parking. With this in mind, Mr. Flaherty will put out a RFP that will invite proposals for short-term parking and short-term maintenance.

## **X. Superintendent's Report**

A. Enrollment. Ms. Rigby stated that the official enrollment date is October 1<sup>st</sup>. CCHS is now at 1,263, which is exactly what had been predicted. There are 30 more students currently at the High School than last year. At CMS there are 696 students, while there were 690 last year. Alcott 462 last year and 462 today. Thoreau is at 453, so we are still down 47, and Willard is 485, which is down 15 from last year.

B. Opening of School. Ms. Rigby recognized Ms. Snook and Ms. Munn for their warm welcoming remarks at Opening Day, as well as Ms. Boynton for attending. The schools welcomed 600 teachers and introduced 23 new colleagues. The concept "Mindsight" was also discussed. Dr. Dan Siegal was the keynote presenter via skype from the West Coast. The message was to think about a balanced life for students, families and teachers. The presentation was collaborated with Healthy Concord. Ms. Jill Block and Ms. Susan Rask from the health department convened a group all this past year consisting of mental and public health workers. They have reviewed the surveys that were done in Concord about lifestyles. Ms. Rigby stated that was determined there was high stress in families particularly for high school students and their families. The mental health team has been reviewing and discussing the mindfulness and education research that investigates the latest neurobiology research related to behavior and attitudes and ways to reduce stress. Suggested

resources are Dr. Dan Siegal's books "Mindsight" and "Brainstorm". These books have inspired colleagues to develop book groups to learn more about adolescence. Ms. Rigby recognizes both Jill and Susan for the terrific collaboration on all of this as well as the District mental health team: "They have done a great job thinking about ways that we cannot only help each other and colleagues to reduce stress, but to teach students stress reduction activities."

## **XI. Citizens' Comments**

1. Tanya Gailus, 62 Prescott Road, Concord. Ms. Gailus commented on transportation and communication. Ms. Gailus stated that it is a bit uncomfortable to not be told about what the town manager is thinking about as a site for transportation. She suggested that it should not be mentioned that there is a site if it is not going to be reported as to where. She is concerned about parking busses at Ripley, even if it just a small number.
2. Paul Horwitz, 173 Hayward Hill Road, Concord. Mr. Horwitz commented on technology and that the Committee should look at research and other experts for input on implementing the one-on-one plan.
3. Sue Richardson, 260 Elsinore St., Concord. Ms. Richardson commented on the time of the School Committee coffee. She suggested that it would be great if the future school coffees were not scheduled on elementary school early-release days.

## **XII. Adjournment**

A motion was made by Ms. Boynton, and seconded by Mr. Benincasa, to adjourn the CSC Meeting. The motion was unanimously approved and the CSC meeting adjourned at 7:30pm.

Approved: 10/14/14