

JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Concord-Carlisle School Committee  
Concord School Committee  
**Meeting Via Zoom**  
March 24, 2020

Present: Wallace Johnston, Chair, CCSC; CSC  
David Model, Vice Chair, CCSC  
Heather Bout, Chair, CSC; CCSC  
Courtland Booth, Vice Chair, CSC; CCSC  
Cynthia Rainey, CSC, CCSC  
Yuval Erlich, CSC, CCSC  
Eva Mostoufi, CCSC

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

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Johnston called the CCSC meeting to order at 9:04 AM, noting that it was being recorded and broadcast via Zoom. Ms. Bout then called the CSC meeting to order.

**II. NEW BUSINESS**

A. Update on School Closures. Dr. Hunter stated that, in terms of curriculum and instruction, the work is around enrichment extension and review. She stated that, prior to the closure, she worked with CTA and CCTA, and got an informal agreement that teachers would push out a daily 20-minute activity per content area or subject. She stated that teachers have a lot of latitude in how they operate, but the hope is to provide kids with a little bit of structure. She stated that the District is reviewing equity and navigating what's involved with special education, ELL, and those that don't have access at home. She noted that the District has leant out some laptops at the elementary level, since it is not one to one, also noting that there is a lot of support being provided to the Boston families. Dr. Hunter stated that there is no accountability at this point, noting that the activities are optional. She stated that because the Commissioner has put them in a place where districts are not on an actual school day program, noting that the 180-day requirement has been reduced to 165 days, these days are just good faith efforts by the system to make sure kids are getting exposure and experience and not feel isolated. She stated that the schools are trying to keep kids engaged, noting that the teachers don't understand the conditions under which kids are trying to work. She stated that feedback from the teachers is a very important part of the discussion. Dr. Hunter stated that the teachers will be synching up on common expectations.

In terms of special education, Dr. Hunter stated that the District is doing what it can to support kids. She noted that, because they are not actual school days, the law does not require that the district provide special education services, noting that the District is being very cognizant of the challenges that brings. She stated that the special educators are working with families to help them access what's available to help make kids as successful as possible. Dr. Hunter stated that, through DESE's guidance, the District is offering virtual IEP meetings for regular, annual meetings.

Dr. Hunter stated that PE teachers are pushing out physical activities for kids to do and that there are virtual art galleries, noting the extraordinary level of creativity of the teachers on such a short notice. Dr. Hunter stated that there is a wide range of activities being offered to students, noting the concern with expecting kids to be online at a certain time each day, also noting that many teachers are home with their own children trying to juggle this as well.

Dr. Hunter stated that she is meeting regularly with administrators to talk on big picture and smaller picture work. She stated that Mr. Stanton is running all the operations and facilities work, including: provision of food and cleaning the sites. She stated that she is in constant contact with the Town and their needs. Dr. Hunter stated that she is starting to hold staff meetings with the teachers and department meetings to build communication strategies and

structures. She stated that custodians are on call and nurses are very busy working with the emergency response and support to families. Dr. Hunter stated that professional development is being offered to all employees. Dr. Hunter stated that the nurses have offered to support the Board of Health, and are working with Emerson Hospital to provide supplies. She stated that the food has been well utilized and that the District will continue to provide it as long as possible, noting that this is not a funded project. She noted that the District received \$13,000 donations in the first week and are very grateful for such an overwhelming response in such a short amount of time. She stated that the District has applied for a small grant to help subsidize the program as well. Mr. Model asked where to donate and Dr. Hunter stated that donation is available through the Food Service Department portal on concordps.org. Dr. Hunter noted that the District is also providing connections to mental health services for families in need.

Dr. Hunter stated that the Administration is having discussions about forward planning should the closure go further than the April 7<sup>th</sup> date. She stated that she's been on extended calls with area superintendents and statewide superintendents to discuss common goals and challenges. She stated that superintendents are on regular phone calls with the Commissioner of Education and are asking for more concrete direction and guidance, noting the many different issues involved. She noted that MASS advocacy has been exceptional in trying to get better direction. Dr. Hunter stated that the responsibility has rested completely at the local level. She stated that: Massachusetts has applied for an MCAS waiver, the College Board has shifted to a 45-minute online test for the AP courses, and MIIA suspended spring season until April 27<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Hunter stated that any plans for further closure would be collaborated on with CTA and CCTA. She stated that April vacation has been discussed, but more thought will need to be given to this, noting she doesn't think this is the best option. She stated that the biggest concern right now is the emotional and physical wellbeing of kids and staying connected, with hopes that students don't build great regression. She stated that the teachers have done a fantastic job and she's very grateful for everything that they're doing.

Mr. Booth commended Dr. Hunter for the calm and stability that she's shared with everyone in the District. Mr. Booth suggested that teachers keep journals to help pull information together to make this an institutional learning opportunity. Ms. Bout thanked Dr. Hunter for her incredible leadership, noting how much the parents also appreciate her leadership. Ms. Bout also thanked the teachers for all of their work in such a short amount of time. Ms. Mostoufi thanked Dr. Hunter for her leadership and sending out information, noting her thanks to teachers for creating connections and normalcy for students. Regarding equity, Ms. Mostoufi asked if the District is tracking students' ability to access teachers and curriculum and Dr. Hunter stated that teachers are able to view which students are logging in and guidance counselors reach out to get a better sense of what's going on. She noted that participation rates have been between 75-80%, noting that the District needs to determine why some students aren't engaging.

Student Reps, Amy Tedeschi and Linda Xu, stated that students have many questions that can't be answered at this point, like what events will be cancelled. Dr. Hunter stated that there are many unknowns right now, noting that once the District sees if the April 7<sup>th</sup> return date is real, it will begin to make decisions. She noted that there is a possibility of pass/fail and that the District is trying to get some higher education input. She stated that the District will be making decisions that work for kids. Amy noted the concern of kids having a lower grade than normal in subjects without opportunities to raise the grade before the term ends. Linda noted how hard it is to be productive and engaged right now, asking many questions about moving forward. Dr. Hunter stated that her concerns are all being discussed right now at the local and state level. Amy asked if anything has been officially cancelled and Dr. Hunter stated that Administration is looking at each activity and are hoping to replicate as many senior experiences as possible. Amy noted how good the communication has been between Administration, teachers and students.

### **III. ACTION ITEMS**

A. **Vote to Confirm Continuation of Employee Payroll Despite School Closures.** A motion was made by Mr. Booth, for both CSC and CCSC, seconded by Ms. Rainey, for both CSC and CCSC, that despite school closures, the Districts will continue employee payroll through the fiscal end of June 30, 2020.

Dr. Hunter stated that Administration is treating this as if people were at work on a daily basis, noting that the cafeteria comes off of a revolving account and revenue. She stated that Administration is looking at stipends, clubs and occasional extra pay. Mr. Stanton stated that everyone was paid correctly for the 1<sup>st</sup> payroll. Dr. Hunter noted that this vote is a formality, and was a recommendation from superintendents that the decision have backup from the SC. Mr. Stanton stated that all of payroll is encumbered, and this will not affect his projections at this time. Mr. Erlich stated

that he finds this vote difficult because it is a blanket vote and not defined by time, sector or financial implication. Ms. Bout noted that the motion was through June 30, 2020. Mr. Erlich stated that the SC doesn't know the implications with all of the different sectors, asking for either more information or for them not to vote on it. Mr. Johnston noted that the number will be lower than what the SC voted. Mr. Booth stated that he was in support of this and also recognized that the SC can unwind a vote in the future if necessary. He noted that the SC needs to be supportive of the staff's basic needs but also think through implications of club, stipend and athletic payments. Mr. Model asked if the custodial staff was helping with other needs and Dr. Hunter stated that the custodial staff is on call for any support needed, noting that the CCHS custodians are currently supporting the food services program. Mr. Stanton noted that each building is having daily building checks and the custodial, mechanics, bus drivers, and food services are on call. Ms. Rainey stated that she fully supports paying hourly workers, noting that bus drivers and custodial workers are losing overtime pay. She stated that the SC needs to do everything it can to keep these workers afloat. Ms. Bout agreed with Ms. Rainey as well as Mr. Booth, noting that the SC needs to approve this, but that administration should not spend more than necessary to keep the base level payroll going. Mr. Erlich noted that he also agreed with Ms. Rainey, but he's concerned with the way the vote is presented and doesn't think the vote is necessary. Mr. Booth noted that he is fully prepared to support this and trusts in Dr. Hunter and Mr. Stanton's judgement. Ms. Mostoufi stated that this situation is very fluid and that not paying employees would send a message to the community.

The motion passed by roll call for CCSC: Booth, aye; Rainey, aye; Bout, aye; Model, aye; Mostoufi, aye; Yuval, aye; Johnston, aye. The motion passed by roll call for CSC: Booth, aye; Rainey, aye; Johnston, aye; Erlich, aye; Bout, aye.

B. Vote to Rescind Parking Article. A motion was made by Ms. Bout, seconded by Mr. Model, to rescind Article 28 of the Concord Town Warrant and the Carlisle Town Warrant Article that deals with the parking at the high school. Mr. Booth noted that he was tasked with diving deeper into this and is confident that the SC can pick this back up when appropriate. Ms. Bout stated that the District is in a much different situation and should be picked up at a different time. Mr. Johnston stated that the District does have the need, but noted that the climate is much different now. Ms. Rainey noted that the coverage of Mothers out Front was misinterpreted and thanked Mothers out Front for their partnership and Dr. Hunter noted that it's been a collaborative partnership. The motion passed by roll call: Booth, aye; Model, aye; Mostoufi, aye; Erlich, aye; Bout, aye; Rainey, aye; Johnston, aye.

Mr. Booth thanked Dr. Hunter for her daily updates and Dr. Hunter noted that she's felt well supported by the community and noted how much the schools bring to the community. Mr. Johnston thanked Dr. Hunter, the staff and faculty, for all that they're doing, noting that the community is better for the work that's being done.

Dr. Hunter acknowledged that this was Mr. Erlich's last meeting, noting that she is grateful for his time. The SC thanked Mr. Erlich for his service and perspective and Mr. Booth asked him to return to a future meeting to be recognized.

Ms. Rainey noted that the Design Subcommittee would be meeting virtually on March 25<sup>th</sup> and the CMSBC would be meeting virtually on March 26<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Booth noted that these committees are meeting because the firms have contracts with the towns and have been approved to proceed. Dr. Hunter noted that there will be constant review and will slow down once the committee feels that it can't get adequate public input. Mr. Johnston noted that Dr. Hunter will be holding another virtual coffee and Dr. Hunter stated that she is planning for Friday at 3:00 PM.

#### **IV. ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Ms. Rainey, seconded by Mr. Booth, to adjourn the meeting. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call: CCSC – Model, aye; Mostoufi, aye; Booth, aye (for both); Johnston, aye (for both); Rainey, aye (for both); Bout, aye (for both); Yuval, aye (for both) and the CSC meeting adjourned at 10:18 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin E. Higgins

Approved: 4.16.20

Abbreviations:

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| CCHS  | Concord-Carlisle High School                        |
| CCRSD | Concord-Carlisle Regional School District           |
| CCSC  | Concord-Carlisle Regional District School Committee |
| CCTA  | Concord-Carlisle Teachers' Association              |
| CMS   | Concord Middle School                               |
| CMSBC | Concord Middle School Building Committee            |
| CPS   | Concord Public Schools                              |
| CSC   | Concord School Committee                            |
| MASS  | Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents |
| SC    | School Committee                                    |