

JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Concord-Carlisle School Committee
Concord School Committee
Zoom Meeting
February 9, 2021

Present: Sara Wilson, Chair, CCSC
Heather Bout, Vice Chair, CCSC; CSC
Courtland Booth, Chair, CSC; CCSC
Cynthia Rainey, Vice Chair, CSC; CCSC
Eva Mostoufi, CCSC
Alexa Anderson, CSC; CCSC
Fatima Mezdad, CSC; CCSC

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

I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Ms. Wilson called the CCSC meeting to order at 5:01 PM and Mr. Booth then called the CSC meeting to order. Roll call attendance was taken: Anderson, aye; Booth, aye; Bout, aye; Rainey, aye; Mostoufi, aye; Wilson, aye.

A. Executive Session. A motion was made by Mr. Booth, for CSC and CCSC, seconded by Ms. Rainey, for CSC and CCSC, that the Concord School Committee and Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committee would 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 6:00 PM. The motion passed by roll call: Anderson, aye (for both); Booth, aye (for both); Bout, aye (for both); Mostoufi, aye; Rainey, aye (for both); Wilson, aye.

Ms. Wilson called the CCSC back to order at 6:01 PM and Mr. Booth then called the CSC back to order. Roll Call attendance was taken: Anderson, aye; Booth, aye; Bout, aye; Mezdad, aye; Mostoufi, aye; Rainey, aye; Wilson, aye. Ms. Wilson noted that the meeting was being recorded.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Julie O'Brien, 67 McArthur Road, Concord, MA. Ms. O'Brien encouraged the district to reevaluate the 14-day quarantine policy, noting her professional background in the mental health of youth. She thanked the district for the steps being taken to keep the children safe, but noted the recent 14-day quarantine of her CCHS student. She recommended that the schools reevaluate the current quarantine policy to align with the CDC and the MA Department of Public Health quarantine policies, noting that science does not support the current school policy. Ms. O'Brien also noted the negative consequences of physical quarantine to the mental health of children.

2. Todd Benjamin. Mr. Benjamin asked to understand some of the challenges in getting the students back to school fulltime as well as some of the action items being taken to get them back to school full time. He then questioned why the SC could not answer the comments from the public. Ms. Wilson stated that it is standard practice that the SC is having a meeting in the open, but not with the public, noting that they appreciate all comments. Mr. Benjamin asked when an answer to his questions would be provided. Mr. Booth stated that Mr. Booth and Ms. Wilson would develop the February 23rd agenda and take Mr. Benjamin's request into consideration when preparing the agenda.

3. John Madden, 1394 Main Street, Concord, MA. Mr. Madden asked why the elementary school children continue to remain on a half day schedule when there is no science to support this, noting that the teachers are not in a high risk job. He questioned why there was no remote learning on the previous Tuesday due to the snowstorm.

III. READING OF THE MINUTES

A motion was made by Ms. Bout, seconded by Ms. Rainey, to approve the meeting minutes from 12/22/20 and 1/5/21. The motion was approved by roll call: Anderson, aye (for both); Booth, aye (for both); Bout, aye (for both); Mostoufi, aye; Mezdad, aye (for both); Rainey, aye; Wilson, aye (for both).

IV. CHAIRS & LIASIONS REPORT AND STUDENT UPDATE

CCHS Student Reps, Amy Tedeschi and Linda Xu, provided updates from CCHS. Ms. Tedeschi stated that the mock Supreme Court and radio play would be starting after the February break. Ms. Xu noted her new study method that has helped her time her homework, stating she spent 4-5 hours on average on homework. Ms. Tedeschi and Ms. Xu noted that the recent snow day helped to bring some feeling of normalcy to the year.

Mr. Booth stated that the CMSBC is meeting at 7:30 AM on Thursday and Ms. Bout noted the middle school community forum on February 24th at 7:00 PM. Ms. Bout stated that the CMSBC is meeting with several smaller groups and has sent out offers to town groups to attend their meetings to update them on the project's process.

Ms. Bout recognized the building and maintenance service crews who ensured the buildings were cleared of snow for the return to school.

V. CORRESPONDENCE

Ms. Wilson stated that CCSC received correspondence on leveled math in middle school and high school. Mr. Booth stated CSC received correspondence on the Safe Routes to School program.

VI. DISCUSSION

A. Overview of Professional Development in Cultural Competency. METCO Director, Andrew Nyamekye, shared: the mission statement developed by the PreK-12 Cultural Competency Committee and the five Strategic Initiatives towards Inclusive Culture. Kristen Herbert, Director of Teaching and Learning, stated that all teachers and tutors attend workshops aimed at inspiring them and Mr. Nyamekye stated that, during the 2018-2019 school year, three keynote speakers attended the workshops, including Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum, Principal Baruti Kafele, and Dr. Derrick Gay. Cultural Competency consultant, Dr. Paula Martin, stated that, leading up to the 2020-2021 school year, the faculty had a cultural competency workshop with herself, Ms. Herbert and Mr. Nyamekye. She stated that every faculty member was asked what antiracist/cultural competency actions they were committed to for their own growth. Dr. Martin stated that there were also several workshops around unconscious bias held during monthly faculty meetings.

Ms. Herbert stated that there are also over 65 workshops/courses/groups serving 471 educators over the last 3 years. She stated that these workshops are choice and participation is optional to heighten awareness, build understanding and develop skills, reviewing some of the courses in cultural competency offered in the PD Paths during the 2019-20 school year, as well as other classes offered within CPS and CCHS. Dr. Martin shared information on the "Can We Talk" series, stating that it is a five series workshop format that members of the Concord Carlisle community sign up for, with topics on unconscious bias, cultural appropriation, gender and native spirits. She noted that the series is offered throughout the school year. Ms. Herbert stated that the district also partners with other organizations that offer classes outside of CPS and CCHS, noting that the district is a member of EDCO and Primary Source.

Mr. Nyamekye noted several groups that are working toward anti-racism education, involving students, teachers and the community: Pre-K-12 Districtwide Cultural Competency Committee, CMS ALLIES, CCHS Anti-Racism Group for Educators (CHARGE), Communities Organizing Against Racism (COAR), PreK-12 Literature Review Committee and CCHS Anti-Racist Curriculum Review. Ms. Wilson noted how expansive the amount of offerings and resources were, also noting all of the supports within the community. Ms. Bout noted that the School Committee strongly supports this effort and Ms. Herbert thanked the School Committee for their continued support, noting the importance of professional development.

Ms. Rainey noted that the Calendar Committee met, noting that she committed to discuss the topic of Indigenous People's Day with the Concord Select Board and asked if the SC could send the CMS 8th grade letters to the Select Board with a request to discuss this topic. Ms. Rainey, Ms. Wilson and Mr. Booth agreed to work on a letter to send to the Select Board from both committees.

A motion was made by Mr. Booth, for CSC and CCSC, seconded by Ms. Bout, for CSC and CCSC, that the agenda be adjusted to discuss Item VII C. CCHS Athletic Update at this point in the meeting. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call: Anderson, aye (for both); Booth, aye (for both); Bout, aye (for both); Mezdad, aye; Rainey, aye; Wilson, aye (for both); Mostoufi, aye.

B. CCHS Athletic Season Update. Ms. Mastrullo introduced CCHS Athletic Director, Aaron Joncas. Mr. Mastrullo and Mr. Joncas thanked the School Committee for its support. Mr. Joncas reviewed the Fall 2 season, starting February 22nd, noting that the Sports Medicine Committee and Sports Committees have met on safety guidelines. He stated that there would be no state tournaments held and that districts are ultimately responsible to follow safety guidelines, sharing that Acton-Boxborough, Lincoln-Sudbury, Newton South, and Westford Academy would be included in Concord-Carlisle's competition pod. Mr. Joncas stated that the Fall 2 season would include cheerleading, football, volleyball and fall 2 track, noting that there are currently 250 CCHS signed up for these offerings. He reviewed several of the protocols, including no fans being admitted to indoor facilities, all athletes being required to wear masks and social distance while not actively competing, and no locker room use, and then reviewed the modifications for football and track, due to their higher risk. The SC noted its appreciation for all that is being done to provide the athletes opportunities to play. Ms. Rainey suggested COVID testing students on the Monday after vacation and delaying practice until results are received and Dr. Hunter stated that they have been discussing testing, but that it may not be up and running in time to test that Monday. Mr. Joncas noted that there were similar concerns with students returning from winter break, but that they did not see an uptick in cases.

C. Concord Capital Planning Task Force Update. Ms. Rainey stated that the Concord Select Board charged the Capital Planning Task Force with looking at how the capital planning process in Concord could be adjusted by either an enhanced process or a standing committee to review capital planning, encouraging the community to attend the bi-monthly meetings.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. COVID Updates. Dr. Hunter stated that there have been 124 total staff and student cases, noting that as of November 23rd, there were only 15 cases. She stated that the district's first school transmission occurred at Alcott over the past two weeks, noting the level of communication and support from the town and the state was critical. Dr. Hunter shared protocol reminders, including 14-day quarantine and elementary entire classroom quarantines, noting that the hope is to go to 10-day quarantine. She reviewed symptomatic testing options and provided an update on asymptomatic pooled testing, noting that staff testing completed the week of January 26 and February 1st were negative, student testing would be added the week of February 22nd and that the state program would run through March 26th. She stated that the goal is full return to school in September 2021, noting the factors involved: local and state virus rates, in school transmission experiences, asymptomatic testing, vaccination of staff and ability to reduce 6' distancing.

Mr. Booth asked about the summer school program and Dr. Hunter stated that Thoreau will house the CASE collaborative special education program and Willard will house the regular education and special education summer program, noting that Alcott was offline due to capital projects. Ms. Mezdad asked when parents could sign up children for the summer school and Dr. Hunter stated that the district is currently in discussions of plans, noting that the program info should be available sometime in March. Ms. Rainey noted the Biden Administration's stance on school opening and summer programs, noting the new information that will be coming out over the next few weeks.

B. Superintendent Evaluation Update. Ms. Bout stated that each SC member was able to meet with Dr. Hunter and Dr. Hunter noted how productive and valuable it was to spend individual time with everyone.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. First Reading School Committee Policies: File JFABB, JIH, JII. Ms. Mezdad stated that the Policy Subcommittee is recommending approval of policies JFABB, JIH and JII. She stated that the subcommittee decided to change the responsibility to the Superintendent instead of the School Committee on policy JFABB – Admission of Exchange Students. Regarding Policy JIH – Searches and Interrogations, Ms. Anderson stated that there were no changes and Ms. Mezdad noted the same for Policy JII – Student Complaints and Grievances. Mr. Booth questioned if there were any legal references on the Searches and Interrogations policy and Dr. Hunter stated that she would check with MASC.

B. CCRSD FY22 Budget. Mr. Stanton shared his presentation on the FY22 CCRSD budget. He reviewed the budget timeline, budget assumptions (including grades 9-12 students back in District full-time), the zero-based budget process, FY22 budget vs FY21 budget by DESE 1000 function, budget drivers by expense type, cost savings by expense type, special education tuitions and offsets, and revenue projections. Mr. Stanton stated that circuit breaker is offset in the general fund budget, noting that he should be able to carry over circuit breaker funds from FY21 to have as a contingency next year. He stated that E&D would be at 4.99%, noting the offset of \$300,000 in the budget.

Christine Reynolds, from Concord FINCOM, stated that FINCOM voted a preliminary guideline on the high school of about \$800,000, noting that it is meant to include the cost associated with the enrollment shift. She asked if this could be compared to the \$900,000 and Mr. Stanton stated that it includes the debt and the increase in additional revenue from the state.

C. CCRSD Capital. Mr. Stanton reviewed possible capital needs at CCHS. Dr. Hunter noted that one of the few remaining projects at CCHS was an amenities building to house restrooms at Memorial Field. She stated that the challenge is that the state requires that you build restrooms to the maximum capacity to the stadium, despite how often it is used. She stated that this would require 44 bathroom facilities, but that this could be waived to ½ if a design is submitted. Ms. Rainey suggesting contacting MA State Representative Tami Gouveia to discuss filing a bill to amend this and also reaching out to both towns to help lobby. Mr. Stanton stated that the access road needs to be repaved and the cost was estimated to be \$790,000 by Gale Associates in 2018. He stated that the campus also needs a tractor to reduce the need for outside landscaping, seeding, mowing and plowing services. Mr. Stanton stated that the tennis court also needs to be resurfaced and would be funded by the athletic revolving account. He reviewed the stabilization fund that can be used to fund regional district's capital projects, explaining how the fund works.

IX. ACTION ITEMS

A. Vote to Approve Staff Request to Enroll Child in CPS/CCRSD. A motion was made by Mr. Booth, for CSC and CCSC, seconded by Ms. Rainey, for CSC and CCSC, to approve the request of Kelly Peirce, teacher at Thoreau, to enroll her daughter in Kindergarten at Willard for the 2021-22 school year and that tuition be waived. The motion passed by roll call: Anderson, aye (for both); Booth, aye (for both); Bout, aye (for both); Mezdad, aye (for both); Mostoufi, aye; Rainey, aye; Wilson, aye (for both).

X. ADJOURNMENT – CCSC

A motion to adjourn the CCSC meeting was made by Mr. Booth, seconded by Ms. Rainey. The motion passed by roll call: Anderson, aye; Booth, aye; Bout, aye; Mezdad, aye; Mostoufi, aye; Rainey, aye, Wilson, aye, and the CCSC meeting adjourned at 9:51 PM.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

A. CPS Capital. Mr. Stanton reviewed CPS capital needs, including the ERU replacement at Alcott (being completed this summer), carpet/tile replacement at the elementary schools, new condensing boiler and controls and sidewalk repairs at Alcott, Integrated Playground at Thoreau, and FY23 needs for Willard, including RTU exterior insulation replacement, walkway repairs and exterior lighting replacement. Mr. Stanton stated that there is \$50,000 reserved for Peabody and Sanborn for life safety and health. He stated that for Ripley, \$75,000 is allocated for design costs of the installation of roof top units. He stated that there is \$350,000 slated for FY24 for boiler replacement at Ripley and \$850,000 slated for domestic water and heating pipe replacement for FY25, noting that most of this cost would be for asbestos abatement. Mr. Stanton reviewed FY23 needs at Ripley, including exterior door replacement, paving parking lot and sidewalk, replacing flooring, exterior repairs and painting, Knox Trail bus roof snow sweep and a sewer system install connection in FY24.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the CSC meeting was made by Ms. Bout, seconded by Ms. Rainey. The motion passed by roll call: Anderson, aye; Booth, aye; Bout, aye; Mezdad, aye; Rainey, aye, and the CCSC meeting adjourned at 10:11 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin E. Higgins

Approved: 3.30.21

Abbreviations:

CCHS	Concord-Carlisle High School
CCRS	Concord-Carlisle Regional School District
CCSC	Concord-Carlisle Regional District School Committee
CCTA	Concord-Carlisle Teachers' Association
CDC	Center for Disease Control and Prevention
CMS	Concord Middle School
CMSBC	Concord Middle School Building Committee
CPS	Concord Public Schools
CSC	Concord School Committee
DESE	Department of Elementary & Secondary Education
DPH	Department of Public Health
E&D	Excess and Deficiency
ERU	Energy Recovery Unit
PD	Professional Development
SC	School Committee