

Highlights from the School Committee – attended by Sharon Carroll

CPS (K-8) Meeting September 8, 2009

Budgets:

- CPS FY'10 is in good shape. The district is running lean to try to reserve money due to the uncertainty surrounding state aid cuts that could affect the current school year. Budget assumes 38% reimbursement rate on circuit breaker funding for Special Education from the State.
- Preliminary meetings have begun to start discussing the process and to get guidance from the Town of Concord Finance Committee for FY '11.

Enrollments:

- Currently the total enrollment K-12 is 3,106 - one less student than last year. Official enrollments are set on October 1st
- CCHS enrollment = 1,246; K-8 = 1,860. Increases in enrollments at CMS (Concord Middle School), Willard and Thoreau while enrollments down at Alcott (new affordable housing units across the street may add a few students this fall) and CCHS.

Maynard Regionalization:

- Peter Fischelis and Diana Rigby to meet with officials from Maynard to discuss the possibilities for regionalization between Concord Carlisle High School and the Maynard High school.

Alan November Presentation to Teachers:

- On September 2, Alan November gave a presentation to teachers related to building a learning environment using technology.
- Diana Rigby has posted notes from the presentation on her blog – you can find a link to it on the Superintendent page on the District website.
<http://www.concordpublicschools.net/superintendent.php>

CCRHS and CPS Joint Meeting September 22, 2009

CCHS Student Representative Updates:

- Student Senate discussion around graduation robes for teachers cut out of this year's budget. Students are brainstorming ways to raise funds to provide them (approx. \$3-4K cost)

- Student senate is processing nominees for student representative for the building committee

School Committee Approves Minutes from 2008-09 Executive Sessions

- These minutes are not made public until the issues discussed are finalized in open session.

H1N1 Update:

- The MA. Public Health Commissioner has a policy mandate for the schools regarding H1N1/flu like symptoms. With any confirmed or suspected cases, persons must be free from fever (100 degrees +) for at least 24 hours without fever reducing medication before returning to school.

NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges) Update:

- NEASC evaluates 99% of high schools in MA. Every 10 years they spend 3 days evaluating the schools according to 7 standards and provide recommendations for improvements. Based on the findings, schools are required to provide reports at 2 years and 5 years after the recommendations given to show progress.
- CCHS remains on warning status due to the facility deficiencies found during the last evaluation and will remain on warning status until all deficiencies meet the NEASC standards. Some of the deficiencies include limited classroom and science lab space, Special Education space constraints and general infrastructure deficiencies (e.g. HVAC, roof, etc.) Note: there is no direct correlation between the NEASC standards and state regulations.
- CCHS remains fully accredited and student outcomes are not impacted.
- Many of the issues have been resolved or are being addressed. The \$250K feasibility study money allocated at last Town Meeting will allow for planning to address the larger infrastructure and facility issues like the roof and classroom space constraints.
- In general, NEASC seems to be pleased with the progress and resolution of many of the recommendations made.

Management Letter and End of Year Financial Statements:

- Deputy Superintendent for Finance and Operations, John Flaherty noted that an actuarial evaluation related to GASB 45 will be performed by the Town of Concord
- The outside auditor recommended the district add an internal audit function to evaluate internal controls. Mr. Flaherty felt that the internal controls, reviews by the Town of Concord and the outside auditor is enough.

Budget Discussion:

- Diana Rigby and John Flaherty will be meeting with members from the Selectmen and Finance Committee to discuss the FY'10 and FY'11 challenges as they relate to state aid for Special Education.

Staff Communications Request Discussion:

- President of the CTA requested listening meetings with members of the School Committees at the schools much like those that were conducted in the search for the new superintendent.
- The Committee discussed the appropriateness of School Committee members meeting with staff and teachers for an evaluation of how things were going one year in from the appointment of the superintendent. Questions related to whether these meetings violate the committee's charter and if it circumvents the chain of feedback were raised.
- Ideas brainstormed for facilitating the communication between the School Committee and staff/teachers were: encouraging members of the School Committee to come to the monthly Superintendent Teas, School Committee Chairs meeting with the CTA and CCTA, and incorporating a 360 degree review into the end of year evaluation process.

CTA (Concord Teachers Association) Contract Voted and Approved by the School Committee

- Comments: despite the difficult and unclear economy, members of the
- School Committee appreciated the good, civil and productive negotiations that took place.

Human Resources Update

- Kelly McCausland, the Director of Human Resources presented her staffing report. Overall, the district has a high teacher/staff retention rate. It was noted that many of those who leave voluntarily do so for family reasons.
- The School Committee asked if there were any recruitment tools that the district could use to attract and retain the best candidates. Kelly McCausland mentioned that affordable childcare in close proximity to the schools was a highly desirable recruitment tool. Currently many of the area daycare do not open early enough to accommodate the teachers' early start time.
- A preview of the district's new online employee access website portal that is under construction. This portal will give staff the ability to access to district employee-centric information and resources via the web.

Maynard Regionalization Follow Up

- Diana Rigby and Peter Fischelis met with officials from Maynard to discuss the possibility of regionalizing CCHS with the Maynard high school as their school facility is in need of significant renovations. It was noted that the State and MSBA (MA School Building Association) seem to be encouraging regionalization in general.
- Concerns brought up by Concord included, the complexity of a 3 school region, concerns about whether Maynard citizens would support our budget levels since their funding per student is lower than in Concord and uncertainty of whether a larger school population is desired.
- As Maynard needed an answer sooner rather than later, Concord felt that regionalization with Maynard did not make sense at this time.

Regionalization of Concord and Carlisle at K-8 level

- Since the State seems to be favoring regionalization Peter Fischelis brought up for discussion a proposal to suggest that the towns of Concord and Carlisle perform a study to look into the regionalization of Concord and Carlisle at the K-8 level.
- In general the members seemed to support doing a study however, the Carlisle members felt that since this is a town decision, the request for a study should come from the Selectmen not the School Committee in Carlisle.
- Estimates for the cost of a study are \$20-30K which would need to be shared by both towns. This topic will be brought up at the next Chairs Meeting

Moodle Software Pilot program:

- Four teachers at CCHS and 2 Teachers at the Middle School are participating in a pilot program to bring the Moodle Course Management System to our schools. This program is funded by a grant for the Concord Education Fund.
- This pilot is intended to create a "blended learning" environment where the technology enhances the classroom experience. There will be a Demo of the program in November