

Minutes

PRESENT: Ms. Rebecca Shannon, Chair
Ms. Betsy Bilodeau
Ms. Jan McGinn
Mr. Patrick Sinnott
Mr. Jerry Wedge

PRESENT FROM ADMINISTRATION: Dr. Brenda Finn, Superintendent
Mr. John Flaherty
Ms. Diana Rigby
Mr. Richard Sederstrom

I CALL TO ORDER AND GREETING

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Shannon at 7:07 p.m.

III CORRESPONDENCE

Ms. Bilodeau received an invitation for School Committee members to attend the Volunteer reception at the Town House on June 17 at 5 p.m.

Ms. Shannon received a reminder that Crosby's Market will be donating 5% of its sales to the Concord Education Fund from June 13-19.

Ms. Shannon received a reminder that the Finance Committee orientation is being held August 12 at 7:30.

IV RECOGNITIONS

Retiring Staff K-8

Dr. Finn recognized Dru-Ann Kocur and Ina Wilhelm retiring from Alcott, Lorita Brockington and Hank Devlin retiring from Willard, Mary Silverstein retiring from Thoreau, Mal Grant William Miller and Karen Lane retiring from the middle school.

Dr. Finn recognized Dick Sederstrom who retires after 44 years of service.

Willard School

Ms. Fernandes recognized a number of teachers who participate in the Chick Unit for 2nd grade. This year the unit has added a rubric and writing pieces to it and the student is engaged in it all.

Middle School

Mr. Unobskey recognized the math and special education teachers who have been working to integrate the math program and will continue to do so.

Alcott School

Ms. Young recognized teachers who have earned professional degrees. Sherry Lincousi earned her Doctorate, Colleen Desmond earned her Masters in Elementary Education and Sue Palmers earned a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study.

Thoreau School

Mr. Popp recognized Sue Howard, technical specialist and her grade 4 class exhibit. She helped produce a number of poetry movies and an I Movie promoting the Spring Concert.

Thank you to Yes Committee and Build Thoreau Committee

Ms. Shannon thanked the members of the Build Thoreau Committee with a certificate. She acknowledged the amount of work invested and the level of expertise was outstanding. They also made a compelling presentation at Town Meeting. A representative from the Build Thoreau Committee also thanked the School Committee and Alex Popp for their support.

Ms. Shannon thanked the YES committee for helping to protect the arts in our schools and this over-ride vote.

VI REPORTS AND ISSUES FOR DISCUSSIONA. Update on improving school culture at Middle School

Mr. Unobskey stated the staff has been working on the School Improvement Plan to improve school culture. Mr. Unobskey would like to challenge students to be individuals while also being part of the community. The staff tries to create a network of relationships for the students.

Kathleen Berklow discussed the "Connections" program where a teacher identifies a student in need. The student is matched with an adult, high school or other middle school student.

A number of new activities are being introduced at the Middle School to give students social options. Ultimate Frisbee, a radio station, pottery, woodworking and a theater program are some possible activities to be offered.

Mr. Unobskey stated bullying happens during less structured times, lunch, bus and hallway passings. Students who are identified as bullying are

given strategies for ok behavior and how to identify issues. Kids who make mistakes are given a consequence and then re-integrated to school.

Through the year the number of bus incidents, detentions and suspensions decreased from October to May.

Kathy Bowen stated there has been a lot of work done in this area which has flowed from grants.

Mr. Sinnott stated this sounds like it is heading in the right direction. He asked about risk behavior. Will that be the next item looked at. Mr. Unobskey stated at this age, students who use alcohol/drugs are doing so out of a sense of loneliness and in frustration turn to self-destructive behavior. They do it in small groups or alone. The Middle School is lucky because the counselor ratio is 1/180. The counselors have time to spend with the kids.

Mr. Wedge asked about other risky behaviors such as school dances. Mr. Unobskey stated the middle school sponsored dances are safe and show appropriate behavior, he has less confidence in other dances. Mr. Unobskey stated kids look for boundaries, we need to set them.

Ms. Shannon asked how parents can best support these initiatives. Mr. Unobskey stated kids learn from their mistakes and this carries over at home. Kids need to communicate on how to make a decision. Ms. Shannon thanked Mr. Unobskey for helping to understand the Middle School better. There is a lot of interest in this subject.

B. Follow-up discussion of June 1 NESDEC Workshop

Ms. Shannon stated it was a good meeting. Mr. Wedge asked if it could have been done without a facilitator.

Ms. Bilodeau stated it is good to have the facilitator because it removes Dr. Finn. There is a steep learning curve and it is good to hear from another superintendent. It was very productive and this doesn't preclude us from holding future meetings.

Ms. Shannon stated an item for discussion was whether School Committee members should be allowed more than 2 terms. There is not a lot of history with high turnovers. Dr. Finn stated it is challenging to be a School Committee member.

C. Energy Conservation Improvement Grants

Mr. Flaherty submitted 2 grants, for the region and for CPS; \$100K would be allocated to each district. If the energy matter is approved by the state, the state would match the \$100K; we would eventually pay the state back

\$30K. The identified projects were for the middle school, Ripley and high school. Areas of improved lighting, acoustical ceiling tiles, boiler replacement, and large portable projects at the high school. We should hear within the next few weeks.

D. Town irrigation plans for Ripley and Sanborn fields

Mr. Flaherty stated in an update of fields they are looking to use untreated water, there is still testing to be done. At Ripley there is well water and at Sanborn there has been a potable water source identified. Concord Public Works will pay for the electric and pumps.

E. Update on Thoreau Principal Search

Dr. Finn stated the interview committee has identified a new principal for Thoreau. They have recommended Joanne Benton, current Superintendent for Lexington. She has served 2 years as Superintendent and prior to that was Interim Superintendent. The interview committee stated this was clearly the top candidate and felt it was a great match. She gets along well with parents; everyone loved her and has great attention to detail. She has been offered the position and we are waiting for a response from her.

VIII SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. Sample policies for review

Dr. Finn stated these are to look at. We meet with the MASC person on June 15.

B. Update on FY05 Federal Allocations for NCLB Grant Programs

This is news from the DOE. We have the preliminary level of funding and will wait to get the final figures. It looks like CPS will receive \$25K less and the high school will receive \$17K less for federal grants.

C. Retirement recognition gatherings for CPS and CCHS

Dr. Finn stated on June 15 at the high school at 2:30 we will recognize 5 teachers retiring. There isn't a date for the CPS gathering but it will be at 3:30 and will be a low-key gathering as well.

Ms. Bilodeau thanked Dr. Finn for putting together these gatherings and making certificates for each of the retiring staff.

IX CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Kansas White, of the audience, said we should look at the Carlisle model for dances and asked about handbook changes. Dr. Finn stated several changes needed to be made to the handbook due to ed reform.

Mark Russell Prior stated the need for input from parents on handbook changes.

Mark Howell, of the audience, stated he is concerned with changes to the handbook, discipline being used, and guidance involved. We need to solicit input from staff, parents and students.

Roz Greenstein, of the audience, expressed the need for children to feel safe in approaching an administrator.

Several other people expressed concern about discipline at CMS.

X ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION was made by Ms. Bilodeau and seconded by Mr. Wedge to adjourn the Concord School Committee meeting at 9 p.m. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura O'Sullivan

APPROVED: 10/12/04