

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

I CALL TO ORDER AND GREETING

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Shannon at 7:05 p.m.

IV RECOGNITIONS

A. Willard School

Pat Fernandes recognized Jane Downes Costello, Primary Learning Center teacher for coordinating the Kindergarten screening. This was the first time it was done in the fall and it went very well.

B. Alcott School

Sharon Young recognized Barbara Southcote, Astrid Moeyersoms, Lynne Paradis, John peachy, Tom and Sue Curtin. They made the visit with the Japanese delegation a success between breakfasts and singing, it was a celebration.

C. Middle School

Arthur Unobskey recognized Isaac Brody who is a music teacher in his second year and the sixth grade chorus who just performed jointly with the high school chorus.

V REPORTS AND ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

A. Review of Willard Facility Needs

Ms. Fernandes presented to the School Committee the needs of Willard as a facility and its impact on student learning.

Mr. Wedge thanked Ms. Fernandes for putting together a report for the Facilities Subcommittee. A lot of the ideas presented tonight were also

presented 5 years ago through the master plan. They are very compelling needs. The Facilities Subcommittee needs to look at this in conjunction with the high school.

Mr. Sinnott asked the square footage currently in the classrooms at Willard. Ms. Fernandes stated it is approximately 750 sq. ft. The minimum for SBAB is 900 sq. ft. and Alcott's new class sizes range from 1,000-1,250 sq. ft.

Ms. Bilodeau stated at the state audit for sped 5 years ago, wasn't Willard not in compliance, what was the time limit on making changes. Ms. Rigby stated corrective action have been submitted, there will be another audit this spring.

Dr. Finn thanked Ms. Fernandes for identifying a number of things regarding safety concerns, building learning impediments, storage needs, and ADA sped compliance.

B. Review of 2004 MCAS: CPS District and School Reports

Ms. Rigby stated overall the Concord School District ranked 22 out of 333 districts. A detailed report was distributed to the committee members. Ms. Rigby pointed out when looking at value added analysis, the same cohort of students are progressing in subject areas.

Mr. Sinnott asked when looking at the jump from 4th to 6th graders in math, the needs improvement category jumped while the proficient category dropped. Ms. Rigby stated principals are looking at the math curriculum and math teams. We also will look at our own student assessments.

Ms. Bilodeau stated years ago a report came out looking closely at students and math. It was recommended students be taught math for one hour a day. She asked do we use MCAS at all and look at best practices from other districts. Ms. Rigby stated we first look at our own data, common assessments. We also look at other districts.

C. School Improvement Plans

Alcott School

Ms. Young presented the MCAS scores for Alcott School. Ms. McGinn asked in areas where test scores were not high, is the curriculum out of alignment? Ms. Young stated the students are not developmentally ready for some material. That is designed to challenge them and look for advanced students.

Ms. Young distributed the School Improvement Plan for Alcott School and discussed the schools goals for 2004-05. Mr. Wedge asked if the grant for

the behavior specialist will be renewed. Ms. Rigby stated we will reapply for the grant. If it is not funded we will not have it.

Thoreau School

Mr. Halliday reported the MCAS scores for Thoreau School. He thanked Marjorie Concon, Bob Fardi and Laurie Link for being very helpful and sharing with teachers.

Mr. Wedge asked if Thoreau science teachers were able to see what other schools like Alcott were doing for curriculum. Yes, the teachers share across the district.

Mr. Halliday discussed the School Improvement Plan for 2004-05 for Thoreau. Mr. Wedge asked if ground-breaking or topping off ceremonies were planned. Mr. Halliday stated he would look into it.

Willard School

Ms. Fernandes presented the MCAS scores for Willard School. Ms. Shannon asked if the IOWA test were still administered. No, it is only MCAS.

The School Improvement Goals for Willard were distributed and Ms. Fernandes discussed the goals.

CMS

Mr. Unobskey presented the MCAS scores for the middle school. At the middle school, math breakfast clubs have been implemented as well as a 10-minute review of the previous material.

Mr. Unobskey discussed the School Improvement Plan for the middle school and the goals for 2004-05. He stated one of the goals of improving school climate includes empowering students. There is a hs/ms mentoring program which has created interaction between high school students and middle school students.

Ms. Shannon stated last fall we heard about bullying at the middle school, how is it looking this fall. Mr. Unobskey stated he hasn't tabulated the numbers but he thinks it's better. Ms. Shannon asked how the bus routes were going. Mr. Unobskey stated the buses are good, teachers ride the bus from time to time.

Dr. Finn thanked the principals and Ms. Rigby for the work they've done with staff on looking at test results, analyzing questions and preparing the elementary report cards.

Mr. Wedge also thanked the SAC members for the time spent on goals.

D. School Committee feedback on Town of Concord Comprehensive Long-range Plan

Ms. Shannon stated the committee received the copy of the long-range plan, she asked that members get their suggestions/comments back before Thanksgiving.

Ms. Bilodeau suggested drafting something in writing that the School Committee is in disagreement with much of this report. It was decided Ms. Shannon and Mr. Sinnott would draft a letter and School Committee members would forward suggestions to them.

The area of building maintenance was discussed. Mr. Flaherty stated it is not advisable to lump all maintenance under the town. We are in a union environment, the town is not. One of the reasons we need new buildings is that the current design is not appropriate for New England. Dr. Finn also added the buildings are 50 years old, the reasons why we need more storage, better facilities didn't exist 50 years ago.

It was decided the School Committee would send their suggestions in writing to Mr. Sinnott and Ms. Shannon by next Wednesday. The final draft will be reviewed 11/23.

E. FY 06 Finance Committee Budget Preliminary Guidelines

Dr. Finn stated a report was made to the Concord Finance Committee which was a response to the budget guidelines; what the needs were and whether the guideline would accommodate those needs. Dr. Finn stated the meeting was very helpful, the FinCom listened carefully and asked good questions which helped us to clarify things.

F. Organizational Chart Review

Ms. Shannon stated the organizational chart was there to clarify the human resources administrator position coming on which will have close relations with the business office. There are also two support positions which are being advertised, an administrative assistant to the Assistant Superintendent and Superintendent as well as a budget analyst.

VI ACTION ITEMS

A. Vote to approve School Improvement Plans

A MOTION was made by Ms. Bilodeau and seconded by Mr. Wedge to approve the Alcott, Willard, Thoreau and middle School Improvement Plans for the year 2004-05. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

B. Vote to approve RFP for Willard School

A MOTION was made by Mr. Wedge and seconded by Ms. McGinn to approve the RFP for the Willard School Feasibility Study. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

VIII SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. Schedule of upcoming Facilities Subcommittee meetings

Dr. Finn stated this is the schedule of meetings.

IX CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Sue Fulshaw, of the audience, thanked Pat Fernandes and the Willard school. She has a 1st grader who was diagnosed with Leukemia in Kindergarten and everyone has been very helpful. She is glad to see the RFP request and asked what happens next. Ms. Shannon stated the School Committee will take it under advisement and there are several directions that this could take. Discussions will happen soon.

Mark Russell Prior thanked the School Committee and administration for the presentation to the Finance Committee. The needs were explained very well. There was a lot of positive feedback after they left. He stated on November 10, at the Town House, there will be a meeting of the Fin Com to discuss the long range plan. Also, on November 17 the final guideline and over-ride guidelines decisions will be made.

X ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION was made by Mr. Wedge and seconded by Ms. Bilodeau to adjourn the Concord School Committee meeting at 10:10 p.m. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura O'Sullivan
APPROVED: 11/23/04