

JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Concord School Committee
Concord-Carlisle School

Committee

Ripley Building
Concord, MA
January 25, 2005
7:00 PM

Minutes

PRESENT:

Mr. Patrick Sinnott, Chair, CCSC
Ms. Rebecca Shannon, Chair,

CSC

Ms. Betsy Bilodeau
Mr. Michael Fitzgerald
Ms. Jan McGinn
Mr. Jerry Wedge

PRESENT FROM ADMINISTRATION:

Dr. Brenda Finn, Superintendent
Mr. John Flaherty
Ms. Diana Rigby

ABSENT:

Mr. David Dockterman

I CALL TO ORDER AND GREETING

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Fitzgerald for CCSC and by Ms. Shannon for CSC at 7:07 p.m.

Student Advisory Council

Matt Briggs reported that during mid-terms, students take 2 tests in the morning and are then expected to attend 2 classes in the afternoon. He asked the School Committee to look into changing this schedule. He stated the two tests in the morning are draining; this time in the afternoon could be used studying instead.

Ms. Bilodeau asked if teachers covered new material in these classes. Mr. Briggs stated it is a review of the upcoming test. Eugene Han agreed the extra two hours in the afternoon make a big difference in terms of studying.

Thomas Schnitzer stated the temperature at the high school is cold.

Ms. Shannon asked if students were concerned about the problem of theft in the high school. Mr. Schnitzer stated it is understood your belongings

are safe if left in your locker, not so if left in gym lockers or out. Mr. Fitzgerald asked the status of the new gym lockers. Mr. Dulong stated they should be installed in the spring.

II READING OF THE MINUTES

Open Session

A MOTION was made by Ms. Bilodeau and seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald for CCSC to approve the minutes from the CCSC School Committee meeting held December 2, 2004. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Bilodeau and seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald for CCSC and a MOTION was made by Mr. Wedge and seconded by Ms. Bilodeau for CSC to approve the minutes from the Joint School Committee meeting held December 14, 2004. Name spellings were corrected and the MOTION was unanimously approved.

IV RECOGNITIONS

Dr. Finn recognized two outstanding students who received the MASC Superintendent's Award for Academic Excellence, Karin Knudson and Molly Crowther.

Dr. Finn recognized Betsy Levinson of The Concord Journal and wished her best of luck as she begins as Editor for The Littleton Independent.

V ACTION ITEMS

A. Invoke Rule of Necessity for Study of Fees

Dr. Finn stated this is necessary when discussing and voting on the fee issue at the high school. It is issued because some members have a personal interest in the fee vote/discussion. The following members disclosed a conflict: Bilodeau, Wedge, and McGinn.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Bilodeau and seconded by Ms. McGinn for CCSC to invoke the rule of necessity so those with a conflict can still discuss and vote on this topic since there is not a quorum without them. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

B. Request permission for Junior State to plan a trip to the Winter JSA Conference

Dr. Finn stated this trip has been done for a number of years. Mr. Dulong states this organization acts as a political body. They discuss and vote issues of national and international importance. It is something we have participated in for a number of years.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Bilodeau and seconded by Mr. Wedge to allow Johanna Glazer, Samantha Fox, and Dora Golding to plan a trip to Winterstate 04 with 5 students. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

VI REPORTS & ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

A. CCRSD Capital Improvement

Mr. Barrett reported on the capital improvements at the high school for the first half of the year. In terms of locker replacement, the team rooms are being reconfigured. The lower gym windows have been replaced and new lighting has been added. The language lab has been the biggest project and it has been updated with much improved technology.

B. Report from Facilities Subcommittee

Mr. Wedge stated the charge of the Facilities Subcommittee was to look comprehensively at the schools and the grounds, Willard, the two middle school buildings, high school, as well as central office-Ripley, Strawberry Hill, and early education needs.

He focused on the needs of Willard; including immediate needs, cost estimates for maintaining, renovating and a new building.

He then reported on the issues at the high school. An RFP has been advertised and an architect has been selected. Mr. Wedge also discussed the cost of maintaining the high school, renovating and rebuilding the high school.

The next steps of the committee are to hold a workshop for Willard, update the School Committee on the high school study, and study CMS and reserve sites.

Mr. Sinnott asked if we cannot use the current Willard as a swing school, and must use Alcott, how do we go about reserving it. Mr. Wedge stated we would have to get approval to keep Alcott on site an additional 2 years. Mr. Flaherty stated we would ask for an extension of the permit. It would be good to alert the town to it now.

C. Health Survey/Emerson Hospital Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results 2004

Kathy Bowen stated Emerson Hospital has been a large supporter of identifying youth issues since 1998. She stated only 2002-04 results would be presented.

Mr. Unobskey stated the school philosophy is to give students a lot of connectedness around adults. Kids have models and need to be able to take safe risks. There has been a decrease in bullying, and the incidents of physical fights have decreased. The self-injuring statistics raise concerns. Another area which raises concerns is related to considering/attempting suicide. This issue needs addressing and there is serious concern. Mr. Unobskey stated tobacco use is seen as a decision

making process. There are also a lot of related behaviors. Cigarette use with alcohol and cigarette use with marijuana.

Ms. McGinn asked how reliable students' answers are. Ms. Bowen stated they are very reliable, and the results are very close to other towns. The validity is high.

Mr. Fitzgerald asked if we understand the underlying cause of this, alcohol rate down in 02, and up in 04. What drives it? Mr. Unobskey stated there are situations where this comes in waves. Mr. Dulong stated a lot of kids are polled; the flipside is that the complementary percentage is not engaged in that behavior. The majority of this is not a school issue, it is a community issue. There is also a pattern with alcohol and tobacco where there is a big jump from grade 8 to 10. Part of that is being a teenager, testing limits.

Mr. Wedge asked what specific help the School Committee can give. Mr. Dulong stated these issues are sensitive; it can cause different reactions in different people. We need to stand behind our teachers even when there are critics. The School Committee can continue to support budgets that include programs related to this issue.

Mr. Fitzgerald asked if there was a program similar to DARE for older students. Ms. Bowen stated DARE is being revamped into a stronger program for 5/6th graders. At the high school, we use good curricula, "drug-free schools" curricula.

Mr. Fitzgerald stated it is disturbing that 30% of kids are in homes where parents allow alcohol. What are we doing to educate our parents?

Ms. Shannon asked Mr. Briggs and Mr. Graham what their comments were. Mr. Graham stated it would be helpful if students could see these numbers, students assume more people are doing more risky behaviors than really are.

Ms. Shannon asked if there were more presentations of this report. Ms. Bowen stated a parent presentation is set up. Mr. Dulong stated he had not thought about a student presentation.

D. High School Athletics

Brent Clark, Athletic Director for CCHS, stated he has been at the high school for 36 years, and Athletic Director for 17. He stated most of the athletic facility looks as it did in 1961. He would rank this facility at the bottom of those in Dual County, the outdoor facility maintenance also needs to be addressed.

Mr. Clark reviewed the history of sports in Concord/Carlisle. He recommended maintaining the existing fields, and upgrading the Athletic Trainer salary. He also recommended adding indoor track (boys and girls), girls' ice hockey, and a separate girls' swim team. In the future he suggested sailing, rowing, boys' volleyball, and a new synthetic turf field.

Mr. Clark listed options in order to fund the recommendations. Two options added money into the current budget, the third option was to increase athletic user fees to \$125.

Mr. Dulong stated in the past six years, 300 students have been added to the student population; nothing has changed in terms of sports offerings. Teams are being forced to cut athletes. There are a number of students we are not serving. The Athletic Trainer is grossly underpaid; secretarial help is also needed in the athletic office. Mr. Dulong stated the easiest way to get funds is to increase the athletic fee. It was instituted in 1991 and has not been increased in 14 years.

Dr. Finn echoed Mr. Dulong, Mr. Clark is looking beyond next year and there are compelling needs for the athletic budget.

Ms. McGinn asked if there were user fees for anything else. Mr. Dulong stated the only other fee is for parking.

Mr. Fitzgerald stated his only concern about increasing fees is regarding families with multiple kids at the high school. Would a family cap be an option? Mr. Dulong stated that is a reasonable thing to do.

Mr. Fitzgerald asked about families who can't afford it. Mr. Clark stated a student would never be denied based on his ability to pay the athletic fee.

Ms. Bilodeau asked should we consider what to do about taking care of the fields now? In the scheme of the regional high school should the land be viewed as we look at the building? We need to engage students, and need to provide facilities in the community for doing healthy things.

Mr. Clark stated before we move forward with new programs, we need to take care of what we have. Ms. Bilodeau asked what specifically needs to be done. Mr. Dulong stated regular mowing, especially spring and fall, seeding, aerating, fertilizing, lining the field, and coordinating watering.

Mr. Fitzgerald stated he supports this action on a fee pending recommendation on a family cap.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Fitzgerald and seconded by Ms. Shannon for CCSC to increase the athletic user fees from \$75 to \$125 effective FY06, school year 05-06.

Maureen Tarca, of the audience, stated when her son graduates this spring he will have earned 9 Varsity letters. She believes sports has kept her son on the straight and narrow and is in support of user fees. She also stated all sports teams are being subsidized by parents.

Ms. Shannon stated it is a shame in education that we need to impose fees.

The MOTION was voted and unanimously approved.

F. Transportation of sports teams (skiing & hockey)

This is a proposed policy first reading. It will be on the next agenda.

Mr. Clark stated there has been difficulty with transportation for the past 5-10 years. We need to be careful making changes.

G. DOE Compliance with Spending Requirements
FYI

H. Budget FY06

Mr. Flaherty reviewed the budget.

Ms. Bilodeau stated the co-curricular fee explanation will need to be changed.

Mr. Fitzgerald asked that the language at the presentation be clarified.

VIII SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. January 11: Meeting with Chief Wetherbee, Lieutenant Paul Macone and Detective Scott Camilleri regarding reporting high school concerns to police

Attended this meeting.

B. January 12: League of Women Voters Forum in Carlisle

Attended this meeting.

C. January 20: Meeting with finance committee representatives from Concord and Carlisle regarding FY06 budget.

Attended this meeting.

D. February 2 and February 15: Meeting with Concord Education Fund representatives regarding grants for 2005-06 school year.

These are upcoming meetings to look at grants.

E. February 14: Carlisle Finance Committee budget hearing, 7:30 p.m. at Carlisle Town Hall

This meeting is on the calendar.

Dr. Finn stated there is a Joint School Committee meeting scheduled during school vacation week. Do we need to reschedule in order to get another meeting before the public hearing. It was decided to make the February 8 meeting a Joint meeting.

X ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION was made by Mr. Fitzgerald and seconded by Ms. Shannon for CCSC to adjourn to Executive Session not to return to Open Session. The MOTION was approved by roll call.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Bilodeau and seconded by Mr. Wedge to adjourn the CSC meeting at 10:30 p.m. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura O'Sullivan

APPROVED: 2/8/05