

### **Minutes**

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

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

ABSENT: Mr. Patrick Sinnott

#### I CALL TO ORDER AND GREETING

The CSC meeting was called to order by Mr. Wedge at 6:31 p.m.

#### III CORRESPONDENCE

Dr. Finn stated the School Committee received an invitation to attend the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual METCO celebration at Franklin Park Zoo.

Mr. Wedge stated the School Committee received an invitation to the American Architectural regional conference from the Green Team. There is a reception Friday night and meeting Saturday a.m.

Mr. Wedge stated he received correspondence from Lyn Paradise regarding an assembly at the Alcott School on the morning of September 15 to celebrate the anniversary of the National Anthem.

Ms. Shannon asked if there was information regarding the regional caucuses. Ms. Bilodeau will forward the information to Ms. Shannon.

#### IV RECOGNITIONS

Dr. Finn thanked the support staff, the custodial and maintenance staff and the Information and Technology staff for the unbelievable amount of work done this summer. She stated Mr. Anderson will apprise the School Committee at the next Joint meeting. She read a list of all projects completed at the high school, middle schools, elementary schools and

Ripley. Dr. Finn stated it was an unprecedented amount of work and people were very positive.

Ms. Shannon asked about the emergency generator. Mr. Flaherty stated installation was not completed yet.

Dr. Finn thanked the staff and principals who hired the new staff members. Staff interviewed hundreds of candidates.

Dr. Finn thanked Danner DeStephano and the recreation department for the close partnership the school system has with them. The services have been expanded this summer and there is a willingness to try new programs. Dr. Finn presented Mr. DeStephano with a certificate of appreciation. Mr. DeStephano thanked the School Committee and stated it wonderful, the sense of partnership. We all work to serve the same families.

## VI REPORTS AND ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

### A. Summer Program

Ms. Rigby thanked the staff members who participated in the summer program as well as Court Booth and Mr. DeStephano. She thanked the people at Thoreau for their support as the site school. Ms. Rigby stated 180 students had been served this past summer. Students were in summer school in the a.m. and joined the recreation program in the afternoon. A readiness program was also developed for the 11 incoming kindergarten students from Boston.

### C. Opening of School

Dr. Finn stated it was a good opening of school. Teachers, principals and students were very happy. The new hire sheet needs to be updated again. There are 31 new teachers and 27 new support staff. At the new teacher orientation, Dr. Finn was very impressed with the level of enthusiasm, engagement and rich backgrounds of the new staff.

Mr. Wedge stated he met a lot of them and was very impressed. Dr. Finn stated there was a day-long new teacher orientation. Ms. Fernandez stated the program Ms. Rigby sponsored was very well received by the teachers.

Ms. Young stated she has 442 students including 8 CASE students enrolled at Abbott. The classes with a higher number than the others are due to students who spend the majority of the school day outside the class.

Mr. Colantuono thanked the Thoreau staff, he stated it was the easiest opening of any building he's ever been in. He stated he has the same

situation with the few classes of higher numbers. This is due to students leaving the class for most of the day. Ms. Shannon asked what is common for class sizes in other districts. Mr. Colantuono stated 24/25 is the common number.

Ms. Fernandes stated the Willard School has 393 students this year. This is the first time the number has dipped under 400. There was a small kindergarten class last year. She is very pleased with class sizes.

Mr. Wedge asked how these students are fitting in to the Willard School. Ms. Fernandes stated they are using all available space. She thanked Mr. Anderson and the maintenance staff, the building looks much nicer.

Mr. Unobskey thanked the maintenance crew and technical staff. They have been working around the clock to get the equipment going. He stated the 6<sup>th</sup> grade is a much smaller class. Ms. Bilodeau asked if the house system is running the same. Mr. Unobskey stated the house size is smaller and there are fewer sections of some classes, ie. Art. Teacher time is allocated differently.

#### D. Reports from Subcommittee

This will be moved to the regional meeting.

#### E. Willard School Facility Discussion

Mr. Wedge stated a lot has been done this summer. The School Committee heard the recommendations from the high school facility study committee and has held two workshops. The School Committee is unanimous in its commitment to ask for design funds for a new Willard this year. There are questions regarding –when to move forward, -how to structure ourselves, and what are the next steps.

A discussion ensued regarding moving forward on Willard design funds, specifically three options: a special town meeting in the fall, the regular annual town meeting followed by a vote at the polls, or a vote at the polls during the March election followed by ratification at Town Meeting. Discussion revolved around the difficulty of addressing immediate capital needs at Willard, but acknowledging that a fall town meeting would be an additional expense for the town. Consensus came around the idea of asking the Board of Selectmen to allow a vote at the polls to March followed by town meeting vote, thus allowing for capital needs warrant articles to be moved should design funds for a new Willard School fall at the polls in March.

The next steps include the coordination meeting on September 22, switch the ballot question order, and look at the impact of Willard and high school down the road.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Bilodeau and seconded by Ms. McGinn that the Concord School Committee request of the Board of Selectmen, in order to move forward with Willard School design funds, reverse the order to have the vote in March at the town elections on Willard design funds article to be followed by ratification at Town Meeting. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

Ms. McGinn is working on the tax impacts with Tony Logalbo. Mr. Flaherty is working on what to do at Willard if the town decides not to move forward.

Ms. Bilodeau stated we are not looking at one year, we are looking at a span of 5-7 years. We need to clearly state that the capital improvements put forward if no new building is approved and how this will not address the educational or condition needs that have been identified in an adequate way.

Mr. Flaherty asked how long would we want a renovated Willard to last. Ms. Shannon stated that is hard to answer, then we still have two schools in great need.

Ms. Bilodeau stated the School Committee has agreed to propose Willard now. We need to look at the expenditures to keep the building safe now and also address educational needs if a new building is not approved. These capital expenses will be in the millions of dollars even if no new building is approved.

Mr. Flaherty stated a decision will have to be made soon. The roof is going to need to be replaced soon. Other areas needing to be addressed are the heating system and pipes will be starting to fail at a more rapid pace.

#### B. Summer Academic Success Program

Mr. Booth stated the CPS budget funded the summer success program. It was critical for the 88 students that attended. There was a great emphasis on reading. The two changes were the incoming METCO kindergarten students received an early literacy program and the separate math classes were stripped away. There was a pull-out program for students who also need math support.

Mr. Booth stated the teachers did a very good job and thanks to community education, special education and volunteers, the kids had school in the a.m. and summer camp in the afternoon. Reports have gone out about student progress to parents, principals, sending and receiving teachers.

F. Preliminary discussion on Thoreau School move in 2006

Mr. Wedge stated there was a meeting to talk about scheduling the Thoreau move for April vacation. There are issues with this time period and a good conversation was held regarding putting the move off until June. The problem is trying to get Alcott ready for September with getting the building down, installing the driveways and fields. Mr. Wedge stated Fred Wersan and Paul Griffin recognize the most important factor is what is best for student success. He appreciated the cooperative spirit.

G. Annual Budget Data Request from the Concord Finance Committee

Dr. Finn stated each year there is a request to gather data. There is a meeting October 13 and a follow-up meeting November 3.

VII OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Wedge stated the Thoreau project is 4 weeks behind schedule. They are confident this will be made up.

VIII SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. October 26-28, MASC/MASS Annual Joint Conference 2005 @ Worcester Centrum Centre

Dr. Finn reminded the School Committee of the conference and if there is anyone else interested in attending to please send reservations in to Leona.

B. Appointment of David Anderson as an ex-officio member of the Concord School Building Committee

Dr. Finn stated he will be attending these meetings as an expert.

C. September 22, 2005: Joint Coordination meeting

This is an FYI. We will continue with work began at the last coordination meeting.

D. Concord Public Schools' support of those experiencing the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina

Dr. Finn stated the response has been heartwarming in the schools. Teachers have coordinated efforts with each other. Principals have been in touch with school districts in the areas affected. This is a way to teach the children about social responsibility.

E. China Principal Shadowing Project: October 2-8

We talked briefly about Concord participating in this project. One principal will visit us. He/she will spend the week before the visit at seminars and classes. On October 2, the principal will arrive in Concord. We are looking for a host family. Three schools have been identified for the principal to visit: one elementary, one middle school and the high school.

IX CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Phoebe Hamm, of the audience, stated she went to the Board of Selectmen's meeting with 3 suggestions for helping the victims of Hurricane Katrina. She is at the School Committee meeting to present the same 3 suggestions. 1. adopt a small town/sister town. Ask other towns to coordinate together. 2. invite children to bring a favorite book to send, students could write a letter inside the book for the child to read. 3. hold a March of Dogs, to raise money for agencies working to benefit homeless animals and pets.

A representative from the Concord Journal asked whether there was a precedence of switching the vote at the ballot. Ms. Bilodeau stated perhaps not in Concord, but it is done frequently in other towns. He also asked if there were concerns of public discourse lost. The answer was that a Board of Selectmen and School Committee election will allow for sufficient discussion of the issues.

X. ADJOURNMENT

With no other public business, a MOTION was made by Ms. Bilodeau and seconded by Ms. McGinn to adjourn the Concord School Committee meeting and enter into Executive Session at 8:05 for the purposes of discussing land acquisition. The MOTION was unanimously approved by roll call.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura O'Sullivan

APPROVED: 9/27/05