

**Minutes**

PRESENT:

Ms. Betsy Bilodeau  
Mr. Peter Fischelis  
Ms. Jan McGinn  
Ms. Rebecca Shannon  
Mr. Jerry Wedge

PRESENT FROM ADMINISTRATION:

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

I CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Concord School Committee was called to order by Ms. McGinn at 6:30p.m.

II READING OF THE MINUTES

A. Open Session

A MOTION was made by Mr. Wedge and seconded by Ms. Bilodeau to approve the minutes from the Concord School Committee meeting held on January 9, 2007. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

III CORRESPONDENCE

A. Notice from Town of Concord Board of Appeals

Dr. Finn stated she received correspondence from the Board of Appeals regarding a Special Permit being granted to Bradford J. Byrd for 47 Walden Terrace in Concord, MA and any appeals shall be filed within 20 days.

B. THOREAU LIGHTING

Dr. Finn stated she received correspondence from John Minty, Building Commissioner and from Marcia Rasmussen, Director of Planning and Land Management regarding a complaint letter received from property owners adjacent to the Thoreau Elementary School and actions that have and will be taken to remedy the situation.

C. FIELD TRIPS

Ms. Bilodeau received a complaint phone call from a parent regarding the cost (\$395) of the Middle School Spanish Class taking a trip to New York City and the pressure that some students and teachers feel to go on the trip. Ms. Bilodeau suggested the Committee keep an eye on the cost of the field trip. Ms. McGinn proposed the Committee be aware of all field trips and that the Committee revisit the policy. Mr. Wedge agreed on reviewing the policy. The Committee discussed how a trip to China offers a different benefit than a trip to New York City and suggested the merits of the trip perhaps did not warrant the cost of the trip.

#### IV RECOGNITIONS

A. Alcott: Gym show performances

Dr. Finn recognized Tim Gaudreau for Alcott's 5<sup>th</sup> Grade physical education performance.

B. Annual Willard Spelling Bee

Dr. Finn recognized Pat Fernandes for her work in the Annual Willard Spelling Bee

C. ActivBoards

Dr. Finn stated that Arthur Unobskey, Principal of the Middle School, would like to express his appreciation for the ActivBoards installed in the Middle School and for the good work of faculty in using them for instruction.

#### V REPORTS & ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

A. Assabet River Project at Thoreau School

Diane Kablik and Sue Erickson presented their proposal for the Assabet River Trail to the Committee. A handicapped accessible trail would connect the Thoreau School to the Assabet River and would always be gated and locked. Two parents, Chris Sgarzi and John Shipe, have come forward to help with the project. The presentation outlined the goals of the project, safety considerations, the Wetlands Protection Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and educational benefits for all grades. Eagle Scouts would assist in clearing the trail, designing benches and cleaning the river. In discussing what has been accomplished to date, it was also said that Sue Erickson has met with Delia Kaye and Katie Holden in the Town's Natural Resources Department of Planning and Land Management to discuss the implications of creating the trail. Sue has also met with Town Manager Chris Whelan to discuss the project. The presentation closed with quotes from students on the importance of the trail.

Ms. Shannon believes it is a wonderful project but was concerned with ticks. This would be a good opportunity to teach kids how to walk safely, with head coverings and tucking pants into socks. Mr. Fischelis was impressed with the amount of preliminary work done on the project before the presentation. Sue mentioned the 100 year flood plain lines were used when drafting the trail plans. The project was split into two phases as a result of cost and funding. The trail is usable now as it stands and Thoreau School hopes to be able to present the trail next fall at the Concord Family Festival.

B. Presentation/School Nurses

Kate Bell and Diane Sneider gave an informative presentation compiled from statistics on Concord Public Schools Health Services. The presentation outlined the various roles of a school nurse, different student stressors that come from school and the community, common reasons for nurse office visits, what is involved in creating individual health care plans for students that need extra care (155 IHCP had to be completed before the first day of school last year), typical numbers of daily repeat visits for students with complex health conditions, accomplishments in 2005 & 2006 and the benefits that result from having health services. Charts in the presentation offered information on the increase in Health Office visits in the past 3 years, increases in some chronic health conditions nurse office visits due to increased awareness and decreases in some chronic

health conditions nurse office visits due to more effective medications, and how health issues warranting a dismissal has increased 2% in the past 3 years.

Mr. Fischelis questioned what drives these complex issues and is there a way to alleviate them? Kate said anxiety and stress in school mimics society and sometimes students put too much pressure on themselves creating internal stressors. Kate said the statistics gathered from grades K-8 in Concord closely follow the statistics gathered from other schools in Massachusetts. They have not had a chance yet to compare the data with the data collected from Concord-Carlisle's High School Health Services. Mr. Wedge questioned if too much responsibility is being put on the teachers for a student's health condition. Kate stated that Health Services tries to be as supportive as possible to the teachers, and they put together easy-to-understand flow charts. While age also determines dependency on health care help, the goal is to have the children spend as much time as possible in the classroom. Kate clarified information about the impact on test scores by stating that improved health correlates with improved scores and their drive is to have healthy kids.

C. Update on lighting at Thoreau School

Dave Anderson updated the Committee on the lighting issue at the Thoreau School. The exterior lights on Thoreau's back parking lot were originally installed for safety. The issue involves 11 lights. The 14 inch round cover of the lights obscure the light so light comes out of the bottom. Reducing the wattage of the bulb from 42 to 26 watts proved unsuccessful as did using an opaque white bulb. The inside reflector will be spray painted a dark gray to tone down the reflection. John Minty, Building Commissioner for the Town wrote a letter of non-compliance to satisfy their concern. Dave has discussed the issue with neighbors. A timer on the lights is a possible remedy, the lights are turned off for now and will only be on past the time allowed if snowplowing or school functions are taking place.

D. Alcott Audit

Dr. Finn publicly acknowledged that she has received notification from Anthony Logalbo that MSBA has given maximum reimbursement totaling \$7,175,997 for the Alcott School. This is wonderful news and reflects the good work of the Alcott Building Committee and the diligence of Tony Logalbo.

E. Willard School Building Committee

Mr. Wedge offered updates on the WSBC. OMR is the selected architect for the project and OMR team members were introduced at the meeting on Wednesday, February 7, 2007. At the next meeting on Wednesday, February 21, 2007 the committee will go over design goals and setting a schedule. A meeting with teachers and staff and a meeting with the community were held on Monday, February 12, 2007, and issues were raised. The Committee will hold another meeting with the community before the design is set in stone. 3-4 months have been involved in the selection process. The intent is for a building that can be Silver LEED Certifiable; the Committee will decide later on LEED certification.

F. Draft Budget Presentation for Budget Hearing

Mr. Flaherty presented the FY2008 Draft Budget for the Budget Hearing to the Committee. Staffing adjustments contributed toward the district's staying within the levy limit. Graphs in the presentation illustrated operating budget increases, decreased state aid and state aid distribution. Concord Public Schools does not receive reimbursement on transportation, and Concord is on the low end of receiving state aid per student. Student enrollment has decreased moderately, however, the cost for operating the identified needs of the schools is fixed and does not go down or up in correlation with the number of students. A summary chart was used to show changes in the budget

VI ACTION ITEMS

A. Vote to surplus five electronic pianos

A MOTION was made by Ms. Bilodeau and seconded by Mr. Wedge to grant Isaac Brody's request to surplus five Wurlitzer electric pianos which will be used for parts. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

B. Vote to change March 20 early dismissal to March 21

A MOTION was made by Mr. Fischelis and seconded by Ms. Bilodeau to change the early dismissal day from Tuesday, March 20, 2007 to Wednesday, March 21, 2007. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

VII OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Wedge suggested that we get an update from CCTV regarding use of cameras and an improved sound system at future meetings.

VIII SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Finn supplied the Committee with a mid-year School Recycling report from Ann Dorfman the Town's Recycling & Disposal Program Administrator. Dr. Finn discussed putting together a Committee composed of Ann Dorfman, school principals, Dave Anderson and the Public Works Director to work on a way to more effectively collaborate recycling efforts between the Town and the Schools. She will work to make this happen.

IX CITIZENS' COMMENTS

A parent in a family with two working family members stated that 5 weeks was not enough time to accommodate the date change for early dismissal and more advance notice is desired.

X EXECUTIVE SESSION & ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned for Executive Session at 9:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Victoria Cushman

APPROVED: 2/27/07