

JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Concord School Committee
Concord-Carlisle School Committee
Alcott School
Concord, MA
January 8, 2008
6:30 PM

Minutes

PRESENT:

Mr. Michael Fitzgerald
Mr. Peter Fischelis
Mr. Fabian Fondriest
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/Carlisle Regional School Committee and the Concord School Committee was called to order by Mr. Fitzgerald and Mr. Fischelis at 6:35 p.m.

II MINUTES

III CORRESPONDENCE

Dr. Finn received correspondence from Representative Atkins regarding local aid. She reminded School Committee members to submit questions prior to the January 22 meeting.

IV RECOGNITIONS

V REPORTS AND ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

A. Calendar Committee Update

Dr. Finn reported the calendar committee hoped to have an agreement, there are still issues to be discussed. Ms. Shannon stated the reason the calendar is still a work in progress is because of where Labor Day falls this coming year.

B. Willard Project Update

Mr. Wedge stated this project will go out to bid in a month. The building committee will identify alternates to guarantee the bid comes in on target. He stated half the project will come from subcontractors and then they will bid the general contractor.

Dr. Finn reminded School Committee members of a small group meeting on January 18 with MSBA regarding Thoreau.

C. CCTV Issues

Ms. Shannon stated the agreement with CCTV was for them to cover the costs of filming School Committee meetings for one year. After that, we need to cover the cost. The question is why didn't the Board of Selectmen include the School Committee in the Comcast negotiations. The Board of Selectmen negotiated with Comcast at no cost. Are the schools responsible for the funds. Mr. Fitzgerald stated it is not a lot of money but he would rather see the money spent on educational program. Mr. Fischelis stated he would call Paul Dewey. Mr. Wedge stated it makes sense to talk to the Board of Selectmen as well.

VI ACTION ITEMS

VII OLD BUSINESS

VIII SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. January 30, 2008: Second School Committee Leadership Roundtable
Attached

B. Request for questions for Senator Fargo and Rep. Atkins

Questions should be directed to Ms. Shannon or Ms. McGinn.

Mr. Fitzgerald stated he was announcing Dr. Finn's plans for retiring at the end of August 2008. Dr. Finn stated it has been a distinct honor to work for the Town of Concord and Carlisle. The School Committee, administration team, teachers, students, support staff all have been wonderful.

IX CITIZENS' COMMENTS

X ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no other business, a MOTION was made by Mr. Wedge and seconded by Ms. McGinn to adjourn the meeting of the Concord/Carlisle School Committee at 7:10 p.m. The MOTION was unanimously approved. The Concord School Committee re-convened in a Public Hearing in the auditorium.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura O'Sullivan

APPROVED: 3/11/08

FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN FORUM

Mr. Fischelis welcomed the audience to the public hearing on full-day kindergarten. He introduced members of the School Committee and administration.

Ms. Rigby welcomed parents and introduced the kindergarten team. She then detailed the powerpoint presentation which was distributed at the meeting.

The School Committee members were given an opportunity to ask questions. Ms. McGinn asked how the Thursday afternoons are structured. She also questioned the stamina of 5 year olds verse 6 year olds.

Mr. Fischelis asked how this change would affect the rush of the ½ day kindergarten.

Ms. Shannon asked what the class size is.

Ms. Rigby then opened up questions from the audience.

Nancy Burnham asked why consensus chose this model. She also asked how many students stay at extended day until 6 pm and how many are picked up at 3 pm.

Lee Rosen asked what the medical benefits were for Kindergarten teachers. Do they receive full-time benefits currently.

A parent stated she was concerned about a five day program. She is relieved with the 3 full/ 2 half days.

A parent asked how is there a savings related to bussing.

Peter Janzen stated he is a full supporter of the kindergarten program.

Amelia Stubbelborn stated she does not want to be forced to send her daughter to full-day kindergarten.

A parent asked how lunch for kindergarteners would work.

Maria Tingoff stated she is a supporter and asked if the Thursday afternoon were a teacher or parent pick and choose afternoon. She also stated she loved the Kindergarten bus and that the full day busride can be stressful.

A parent asked if there were parent volunteers for the cafeteria, would specials be longer.

Sharon McGregor asked the committee to consider the fact that too much academic work at a young age is not good, the value of outdoor play and playing in nature, unstructured time at a young age is important.

A parent stated with the demands the state puts on education, this move is imperative. This is a good compromise.

Ann Herzeleger asked why Friday was chosen as a full day.

Fred Martin stated this process was not designed for input from parents. He stated the teachers had consensus without the town.

Heather Martino stated schools are being run like corporations.

Dawn Epstein stated she strongly endorses full-day kindergarten.

A parent stated they trusted the teachers to provide the best option for their students.

A Concord Kindergarten teacher stated the teachers used their best professional decision, they are here for Concord's children.

Eric Massey stated last year his kindergartner met the curriculum goals by 98%. How is increasing educational time by 53% valuable.

Ed O'Neill stated his concern was there no options for parents to have their kids home at noon. It seems like a done deal.

Mr. Fischelis thanked parents and teachers for coming and stated the School Committee will take the discussion into consideration.