In the absence of Committee Chair Barb Higgins, Jennifer Patterson called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m. She began the meeting with a review of the seven goals for this committee as they were created in January at the School Board retreat.

1. Understand the development and implementation of PACE in the schools
2. Look at middle school philosophy and programs – including technology integration and the development of future programs
3. Review data from technology integration practices to assess impact on student applications and learning
4. Make recommendations for the development of the school calendar, being mindful of the importance of continuity in instruction and opportunities for professional development
5. Make recommendations to the Board regarding early childhood education, full-day kindergarten programs, based on the findings of the steering committee
6. Gain knowledge about the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)
7. Consider next phase in technology integration development as it moves into the high school

Assistant Superintendent Donna Palley began the presentation of Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) by describing the history of the development of these new standards and the District’s work to begin moving them forward in the schools.

Focus:

The NGSS focus on deeper understanding and application of science content reflecting real-world interconnectedness. The focus is on a limited number of core ideas, but each in greater depth.

Coherence:
Science and engineering build coherently (horizontally, vertically and developmentally) across K–12. New learning builds on previous knowledge, skills and instruction.

Integration:

Science and engineering are integrated across K–12. The standards emphasize integration of content knowledge and science practices.

Ms. Palley described how the NGSS look at three different dimensions: practices; disciplinary core ideas (key content); and cross-cutting concepts. Ms. Palley described how science practices are connected to and overlap both mathematics and English language arts standards. The cross-cutting concepts support the development of applications across all domains of science and are meant to bridge concepts across the domains. The disciplinary core ideas are grouped into four science domains – physical science; life science; earth and space science; and engineering, technology, and the applications of science.

She shared a slide showing the progression of a core idea in physical science skills from elementary to middle to high school. She also shared an overview of a physical science core idea for a third grade unit on motion and stability.

There were questions about the impact these new standards will have on the high school program of studies. Ms. Palley shared that Concord High School teachers have been looking at more integrated science studies. She referenced the Next Generation Science Standards website and recommended that Board members who are interested should visit the site: http://www.nextgenscience.org/.

The Committee was given an overview of a fourth grade science assessment from PACE: Energy Project - Solar Cooker. Using this assessment, students work in groups to research solar cookers, create a diagram of a solar cooker, build a solar cooker, test their device, and record their findings. This happens over several days in school. Students have to work in groups and must also work independently.

The implementation of these standards will happen over a three-year period. The District science committee has created a pathway for implementing these new standards. Primary classrooms have three units, and intermediate classrooms have four units to complete in a year’s time. Currently, teachers are piloting materials that address these new standards.

Ms. Palley described work that will be undertaken this summer with the Museum of Science: The Gateway Project, led by Dr. Yvonne Spicer. http://www.mos.org/gateway-project. This will be an opportunity for District teachers to gain more expertise in their science teaching skills with a special focus on engineering and technology programs.

Performance Assessment for Competency Education (PACE)

Ms. Palley provided a brief overview of the PACE evaluation schedule for students and described the process of implementing and scoring assessments. This process
involves teacher time and dedication. She shared that multiple sources of evidence will be used to produce each student’s “annual determination of proficiency” in English language arts, math, and science for state accountability purposes. Students will be assessed on the body of their work over the school year.

- Teacher Judgment Survey, using Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs)
- Competency Grades, with Pace Common Performance Task included
- Also reviewed to support calibration: Student work samples

Committee members had several questions about teacher support in this process; parent communication; and connection to the student’s transcript. There will continue to be a level of accountability and reports will be created for individual students, for grade levels, for schools and for the District. Ms. Palley shared that the District’s dedication to PACE is connected to the idea that assessments are in line with instruction. Work to align elementary report cards across the schools will be undertaken, as there are currently several different report cards.

Committee members expressed understanding of the challenge to differentiate instruction to support student learning. They recognized that the elementary schedule supports teachers in collaborating on instruction and gaining support from intervention specialists in classrooms.

Ms. Patterson asked about SAT administration at Concord High School that occurred in March. Ms. Palley shared that the administration of the test seemed to go relatively smoothly.

The Committee voted 4-0 to adjourn (motioned by Maureen Redmond-Scura, seconded by Ms. Patterson).

The meeting adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

Terri Forsten, Recorder