Concord School District Board of Education
Instructional Committee
May 17, 2017

Committee members present: Alana Kimball, Chair, Pam Wicks, Jennifer Patterson, Maureen Redmond-Scura

Other Board members present: Tom Croteau, Jim Richards, Clint Cogswell

Others: Superintendent Terri Forsten, Assistant Superintendent Donna Palley

Committee Chair Alana Kimball opened the Instructional Committee meeting with an overview of the topics to be discussed (assessment data and kindergarten programs) and then turned the meeting over to Assistant Superintendent Donna Palley, who presented a review of the AIMSweb data by a cohort that includes this year’s third grade students and their AIMSweb data over first, second and third grades. There is good growth in this cohort. The second data overview using AIMSweb looked at three different cohorts; this data indicates trends in student growth. AIMSweb is used three times a year from kindergarten through eighth grades. Tom Croteau asked for the number of students in each cohort; Ms. Palley confirmed that there are about 300 students in each cohort.

The next data was a review of grade four students, on the Fountas and Pinnell assessment, with a comparison between students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch and those who do not qualify. Ms. Palley explained that the hope would be that the gap between these two groups would close, and that is what the data shows for these students. The next slide showed the same data, with a focus on students who attend Mill Brook (MBS) and Broken Ground Schools (BGS), where the highest number of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch attend. This data was impressive as it showed the gap was definitely closing between these two groups. Ms. Palley reviewed innovations at these two schools. There was a conversation about the notable dip in the fall assessment.

Ms. Palley moved on to the Smarter Balanced Assessment for grade 3. SBA results for this year were reviewed; the growth in third grade across the district is impressive. Ms. Palley that teachers have been doing practice assessments with students and have worked to implement the more advanced standards into instruction.

Ms. Palley presented Rundlett Middle School (RMS) data, beginning with grade 7 Math PACE Task 2017. She described each of the domains that were presented: reasoning (68.2%), modeling (65.9%), structure (76.2). She described the PACE task required of the students in this assessment. She then reviewed AIMSweb grade 7, three years of data with this cohort. 77% – 79% – 82% of students are achieving at the average and above-average range. Ms. Palley shared a grade 8 Smarter Balanced assessment results in
English Language Arts and Mathematics over a two-year period. Students’ achievement is impressive and exceeded the state numbers, as compared with the state results in spring 2016. Ms. Palley noted that growth is evident with the new Math program. Pam Wicks concurred that she has seen that in her children at home.

Ms. Palley presented the high school assessment results in the SAT 2016 results for juniors. She reminded the Committee that all Concord High School students are now taking the SAT as part of the state assessment. CHS results are well within the average for the state. English Language Arts numbers are Concord 513; statewide 520 and Mathematics numbers are Concord 503; statewide 507. This spring’s SAT results are not available yet. Ms. Palley also reviewed the Advanced Placement (AP) Assessments from 2016; CHS students had the opportunity to take 16 different AP Tests. These results will be reviewed with the high school teachers. Ms. Palley reviewed the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test in grade 10; this is not given to all students. CHS students are moving out of the lowest percentile and continue to grow in the average and above average group.

Superintendent Forsten presented a two-page overview, Developing and Planning for Full-Day Kindergarten. This overview used the costs that had been presented at the February 1, 2017 Budget meeting to project associated staffing and other related costs. The presentation included a “big picture” review of curriculum-instruction for a full-day kindergarten. Ms. Palley shared that kindergarten teachers would have some time in June to consider the development of a full-day program and its implications for curriculum and instruction. Superintendent Forsten reviewed the projected additional kindergarten teachers, educational assistants and part-time itinerant teachers that would be required. She reminded the committee of the challenge of projecting the number of educational assistants required to support students with special education needs; the number offered is reflective of the typical increase. She reviewed the spaces and places in each elementary school, as six additional classroom spaces across the District would be needed. Abbot-Downing School (ADS) would be impacted, where the Concord Regional Technical Center (CRTC) Teacher Prep program runs a preschool, as that classroom would be relocated in the building. At MBS, the challenge is that there would not be space remaining for the integrated special education preschool. There was concern about this impact expressed by committee members, and options for the preschool would continue to be considered. Part of the challenge is that per school facility codes, preschool, kindergarten, and first grades cannot be located on a second floor.

Numerous questions were posited, with topics to be considered and further developed. Tom Croteau expressed appreciation that the Board has the time to carefully consider these questions as the plan for full-day kindergarten is developed. Topics to be considered and brought forward to the Instructional Committee in September 2017:

1. Sample schedules for a full-day kindergarten program which acknowledge developmentally appropriate practices were requested.

2. A full-day program curriculum overview was requested. The idea of moving from play-based experiences to academic skill-building should be further developed.
3. More information on the costs associated with transportation was requested. Committee members discussed whether the elementary school buses were not very full; perhaps this could be looked at differently.

4. As part of the conversation about having the kindergarten day end at 1:45 p.m. rather than the 2:30 p.m. time for students in grades 1-5, more information about the options to provide onsite, afterschool childcare and its associated costs was requested.

5. There was a conversation about whether current specialist teachers (art, music, physical education) may be able to pick up the kindergarten classes. A substantial savings could be realized if the Itinerant Staff were not needed.

6. More information about the school facility codes that state first-grade students may not have homerooms on the second floor of a school was requested. This is related to MBS and wanting to maintain spaces for preschool classroom space.

7. Consideration of fifth graders moving to a new middle school facility and how that would open classrooms and spaces in the elementary schools was discussed.

Maureen Redmond-Scura made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alana Kimball, Chair

Terri Forsten, Recorder