Concord School District
Board of Education
Instructional Committee

Date: September 5, 2018

Committee members present: Maureen Redmond-Scura, Chair; Pam Wicks, Clint Cogswell, Liza Poinier

Other Board members present: Chuck Crush, Tom Croteau

Administration and Staff: Superintendent Terri Forsten; Assistant Superintendent Donna Palley; Director of Physical Education Steve Mello; Hockey Coach Duncan Walsh; CHS Special Education Director Michele Speckman

The meeting was called to order at 5:31 p.m. The agenda included consideration of a Junior Varsity Ice Hockey proposal, information about Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) training in the District, presentations on restraint and seclusion, recent academic assessments, and plans related to a Behavior Task Force.

1. Junior Varsity Ice Hockey Team proposal

Steve Mello and Duncan Walsh presented a proposal to add a Junior Varsity Ice Hockey program at Concord High School. This program has not been in place since 1988. An ongoing Midget hockey program had been offered by the Capitals, so there was not a need to duplicate this program in the school. The Midget program ended several years ago. In the last five to seven years, not as many youth participated in hockey in the City. In the last two years, there has been a resurgence of interest, and a growing number of students are trying out for a limited number (20-24) of spots on the varsity team. This past year, 10 students were cut. There is now a growing number of younger students interested in playing hockey. Looking at youth hockey numbers going forward, it seems that without a JV team at CHS, approximately 20 students will not be able to play in the next few years, with no other options for playing in the Concord area. An opportunity now exists to become involved in a Junior Varsity league that meets in Hooksett. The total estimated cost for this program would be $10,895. Expenses include league fees ($3,500), coach ($2,495), transportation ($2040), practice ice time ($2,860) and league dues ($3,500.) Approximately 16-18 students would be expected to play.

Mr. Mello noted that student fees for hockey are higher than other sports. He also noted that ample funds are available for scholarships so that no student misses out on playing because they cannot afford the fees. This proposal does not include a request for funds from the District for the first year of the program. Mr. Mello estimated that $6,930 in revenue would come from fees collected from students, based on 18 students. The Booster Club is committing to raising $3,965, and would supply uniforms. A budget proposal to
fund this program after the first year would need to be made through the regular District budget process.

The Committee voted 4-0 to recommend this proposal for the first year of Junior Varsity Hockey at CHS for consideration by the full Board (motioned by Clint Cogswell, seconded by Pam Wicks).

2. Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) Training

Michele Speckman, CHS Special Education Director, introduced the CPI program, used to train teachers, administrators and specialists across the District in non-violent crisis intervention. The District has three in-house trainers, including Ms. Speckman. The District had previously used several other programs for the same purpose, introducing CPI in the last several years.

Non-violent crisis intervention is the cornerstone of CPI, which stresses care, welfare, safety and security. This program is used in a variety of venues, including schools, hospitals and police settings. CPI training is intended to improve school culture, and support behavior and the development of relationships with students. Through the training, staff learn to defuse challenging and disruptive behavior before an incident escalates to a crisis. The training supports adults reflecting on their own behavior, and benefits students, staff and the District in a variety of ways.

For staff to be CPI certified, each person initially participates in a two-day training, and a one-day annual refresher is required to maintain the certification. All administrators in the District are trained. Many educational assistants are trained, as well as special education teachers, and related service professionals. Some general education teachers have also been trained. An initial training for new staff is held within the first weeks of schools. Overview training (not for certification) has occurred in each building for all teachers, and this work has been very well received. Feedback from across the District has been very positive.

The program focuses on using verbal cues with students. Participants look at how crisis situations evolve and develop and examine issues of respect, service and safety at work. They explore non-verbal and verbal elements of communication that can impact a crisis situation, and practice de-escalation strategies. They focus on setting limits with students and understanding the reciprocal relationship between one’s own behavior and the behavior of others. The training emphasizes ways to help students develop coping mechanisms and explore ways to learn from crisis situations and improve future work. The training includes role-playing and practice in using restraint procedures.

Ms. Speckman described the Crisis Development Model, and how it is used to identify approaches to be used based on student behavior. They also train staff to differentiate between low, medium and high levels of behavior, helping staff understand the types of behaviors that might ultimately require physical intervention.
District trainers also offer specialized training related to students with autism. Staff learn about developing self-control plans that help them to stay on track when they are dealing with very difficult behaviors.

Ms. Speckman noted that all grade levels are involved in training. There are trained teams in each one of the schools. Language issues may arise with new students, but staff use close observation techniques to determine needs, with student behavior being very telling. There is much discussion about trauma and its impact on behavior. Issues of cultural sensitivity related to behavior management are also discussed.

The District has joined with many partners to work with students who exhibit challenging behavior. There is a strong partnership with Riverbend, with clinicians in most schools, and consulting specialists who work in the buildings as well.

Parents have not been trained in CPI, but Ms. Speckman noted that she has provided information and materials about CPI to parents. There are strict protocols for contacting parents in the case of physical intervention.

Ms. Speckman noted the importance, when working with students, of understanding what is causing underlying behaviors, which involves taking time to build and sustain relationships. She also indicated that it is important for teachers, even of younger grades, to help students who are observing their peers with behavior issues understand what is happening.

3. Restraints and Seclusions

Superintendent Forsten presented data on incidents of restraint and seclusion during the 2017-2018 school year. She reported that there were 63 incidents of restraint that involved 21 different students. Of these 21 students, 14 students were involved in 1-2 incidents, 4 students had 3-5 incidents and 3 students had 7-18 incidents. There were 49 incidents of seclusion that involved 9 students. Of these 9 students, 5 had 1-2 incidents, 2 students had 4-6 incidents, and 2 students had 12-21 incidents.

Overall there were 112 incidents of restraint and seclusion, involving 25 students, representing .005 (5/1000) of students.

The rooms used for seclusion vary, with a specific seclusion room connected to the 3R program at Beaver Meadow School. Other rooms used for this purpose are small office spaces generally used for students who need a one-to-one learning environment at times. Students who have experienced larger numbers of restraints or seclusion have one-to-one assistant support.

There are some students, generally in primary grades, who tend to run away from staff and sometimes from the building. They are not restrained unless they are in imminent danger. Staff use protocols learned through CPI training to support these students.

4. Assessment Results and Data

Ms. Palley reviewed AIMSweb as a generalized reading assessment tool. This tool is used through sixth grade in the District and the assessment is administered three times a year.
She shared AIMSWeb data from last year that showed growth in students’ achievement across the year in grades three, four, five and six. Some students are given this assessment more frequently to monitor their progress more closely. Ms. Palley also shared the test results for students as part of a cohort as they moved from first grade to fourth grade using AIMSWeb. The number of students who are falling below average is decreasing, and the number of students who are achieving above average is increasing. Ms. Palley also showed the Committee a grid that demonstrated more frequent AIMSWeb progress monitoring for a kindergarten student example. This student’s skills in reading, based on words per minute, were assessed weekly by the teacher. It takes one minute to assess this student’s reading development each week. We can see a growth trend with this student.

Elementary teachers use another assessment called Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark (F & P); it is given in the fall and spring each year, and at mid-year for students who are reading below grade level. F&P data from third, fourth and fifth graders was shared, highlighting the percentage of students who were developing reading proficiency at grade level. Ms. Palley shared data on a group of students as they moved from first to fifth grades; this data also included information on two subgroups (free/reduced lunch, non-free/reduced lunch).

Ms. Palley presented information on student achievement in Mathematics. Fourth grade results were strong last year, with very few students scoring well below proficient.

She offered a reminder that 36% of the District’s students participate in the free or reduced lunch program, while the state average is 28%. The District’s English Learner (EL) population represents 9% of total student population, while the State EL population is 3% of total school enrollment. She reviewed students’ achievement in the Statewide Smarter Balanced Assessment over the past three years. Concord students showed steady progress in reading and math over a three-year period with this assessment. In the final year of that program, students were performing near, at or above the State as a whole. A new assessment was instituted last year, with Concord students at grades 3 and 4 performing below the State average, and students at 8th grade performing at or above. SAT results have not yet been released.

5. Behavior Task Force

Superintendent Forsten gave an overview of the upcoming Behavior Task Force, which will be similar in process to the Early Childhood Task Force. The Task Force will include experts who will function as a core leadership team, as well as a larger task force, with perhaps up to 40 individuals. It is anticipated that there will be working subgroups, with opportunities to solicit feedback from focus groups. The essential question that will guide the work is: ‘What are best practices in social-emotional learning development and how does that connect with the school community?’ She noted the work of educational researcher Linda Darling-Hammond, who wrote about the importance of four dimensions of social-emotional aspects of learning:

- Intentionally designing developmentally healthy learning environments
• Directly teaching social and emotional learning strategies
• Attending to the social and emotional learning needs of teachers and leaders
• Explicitly focusing on preparing students to be socially aware, skilled, and responsible

Task Force meetings will likely begin in October and are expected to continue for the year and perhaps into the Fall 2019.

Mr. Crush inquired about visiting schools to see the areas associated with seclusion spaces, and will coordinate a time for those visits with the Superintendent.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Redmond-Scura, Chair
Donna Palley, Recorder