Concord School District
Instructional Committee

School Board Committee: Instructional

Date: October 10, 2012

Committee members present: Jennifer Patterson, Chair, Barbara Higgins, Chris Casko, Clint Cogswell

Other Board members present: Kass Ardinger, Elizabeth Hoadley

Administrators: Chris Rath, Superintendent; Donna Palley; Assistant Superintendent; Tom Sica, Principal, Rundlett Middle School; Gene Connolly, Principal, Concord High School, Steve Rothenberg, Assistant Principal, Concord High School

1. 2013 Fall Enrollment Report

Superintendent Rath presented the Fall 2012 Enrollment Report, answering questions from members of the Board.

Elizabeth Hoadley noted the reduction in the number of fifth graders this year, with smaller numbers coming along in lower grades. Rundlett Middle School will see a drop in enrollment in the next years.

Superintendent Rath noted that the number of teachers at Rundlett was reduced by two last year and two this year. In addition, a special educator and part-time PE teacher were reassigned to other buildings. Mr. Sica indicated that the configuration of teams at Rundlett has changed over time. There are now both 3-person and 2-person teaching teams in the sixth grade. The overall population at Rundlett is close to 1,000 and may drop slightly below this number next year.

Mrs. Hoadley noted that, given the declining enrollment in the upper grades, the Board and administration will need to be thinking about staffing in the budget process.

The Concord Regional Technical Center enrollments are down from two years ago but are similar to last year’s numbers. All the programs are well-subscribed. Mr. Rothenberg noted that there is a good balance between Concord High and sending school enrollments.

Mr. Rothenberg noted that the implementation of the Fire Science program has been delayed. Twenty students requested the program, but the decision was made to wait one year to make sure that the model is well-defined. Mr. Rothenberg anticipates that the Fire Science Program will begin next year, and that it will be offered to 18-20 students in a semester-long, half-day class located at the Fire Academy. The EMT course may be delayed for an additional year.
Mrs. Hoadley asked whether the revenues received from sending schools are close to covering the programs’ costs. Superintendent Rath reported that the tuition was increased several years ago.

Mrs. Hoadley noted the decrease in the number of students at Concord High with IEPs at the same time that there has been an increase of a special educator and a social worker at Concord High. Assistant Superintendent Palley indicated that the social worker is a shared position with Lutheran Social Services, serving our English Language Learners. The caseloads at Concord High were high compared to our other schools. With the reduction in the number of students at the high school and the reassignment of a special educator from Rundlett to Concord High, the caseloads are now more evenly balanced.

Mrs. Hoadley inquired about the new media/technology teacher positions.

Superintendent Rath described the change in this area. At one time, the District had a single professional elementary media position. This position was eliminated several years ago. With the consolidation of the elementary schools, several positions were eliminated, including two assistant principals, a school secretary, and technology assistants. The Technology Reps in the buildings are also not funded this year. Four Media/Technology Integrator positions were added, with one of those positions funded through a grant.

The Media/Technology Integrators manage the learning commons and library/media programs in the elementary schools. Their focus is on integrating technology and media into the classrooms. Most of the daily teacher preparation periods are covered by additional PE, music or art available at the elementary level because of the consolidation process, with just a few separate technology classes provided in each building. Students are able to access the building library, with teachers and parent volunteers helping students check out books. This is a work in progress.

Ms. Ardinger recalled a guest speaker, Ross Todd from Rutgers, who described the need for professional librarians in schools. With the vast amount of information that comes in through technology, it is important to teach students how to manage this information. This was a critical point in the decision to hire professional media/technology staff.

Mrs. Hoadley noted that the Director of Facilities position is now part of the District’s budget. Superintendent Rath indicated that Mr. Cashman is also managing the Community Education Program, as the Director of Community Education position was eliminated.

2. NH Accountability System

Superintendent Rath provided an introduction to the new NH Accountability System and the Accountability Report. This system is being used to measure whether schools in NH are providing the opportunity for an adequate education. There are two tests: an input-based system, based on a self-evaluation related to 12 standards, and a
performance-based system, based on test scores. To be judged adequate, a school must meet either the input-based or performance-based accountability measure.

*Input-Based Measure*

Each school completes a self-assessment related to 12 standards. Concord schools met most standards, but have several areas of need:

- Elementary Health Education: better coordination of health instruction across the elementary schools is needed. Steve Mello, Director of Physical Education and Sport, will head up a group of educators to work on this task.

- Middle School Family and Consumer Science: appropriate instruction is provided to students, but the District will improve its reporting to the DOE.

- Information and Communication Technology (ICT): a new K-12 digital portfolio system must be developed and the curriculum must be revised. The high school program will be examined. Previously, students were able to demonstrate competency with ICT standards at the middle school level. Now, students must demonstrate that they meet a high school level of competency. This can potentially be accomplished at the 8th grade level by some students. Options at the high school will be reviewed, including an integrated approach and a half-credit course. The Technology Plan will be updated.

*Performance-Based Measure*

The performance-based aspect of the system uses results from three assessments: the NECAP, the ACCESS (for English-Language Learners), and the ALPS (for students with significant educational disabilities) to determine whether a school is providing an adequate educational opportunity. Other indicators include the rate of student participation in assessments, excessive absences, graduation rates, and dropout rates. Scores on a four-point scale are given for the whole school as well as subgroups, including students with disabilities, students learning English, and students in low SES groups.

Concord’s results indicate:

- At the high school:
  - Strong scores in reading, weaker scores in math and science
  - Strong attendance
  - Strong five-year graduation rate
  - Low dropout rate
  - A total final score of 2.7 (2.1 is defined as ‘adequate’ at the high school level)

- At the middle school:
  - Strong scores in reading and math, weaker scores in science
  - Strong participation in testing
  - Slightly more absences than the high school
o A total final score of 3.1 (2.3 is defined as ‘adequate’ at the middle school level)

- At the elementary schools:
  o Growth scores in reading and math that meet adequacy levels
  o Particularly strong growth scores at Broken Ground School
  o More absences than middle and high school
  o Total final scores for our elementary schools ranged from 2.9 to 3.6 (2.3 is defined as ‘adequate’ at the elementary level)

Superintendent Rath noted that the type of information received from this report related to academic growth, absences, graduation rates, dropout rates, and attendance, is helpful. Results from all schools in New Hampshire can be viewed for comparison purposes at http://www.screencast.com/t/MsLZHCHih

In the 2014-2015 school year, a new State assessment will be introduced. It will, in part, be a computer-based assessment. There may be technology-related budget implications to support this testing process.

The Committee adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Patterson, Chair
Donna Palley, Recorder