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

Other Board members present: Kass Ardinger, Elizabeth Hoadley

Administrators and school staff present: Chris Rath, Superintendent; Donna Palley; Assistant Superintendent; Gene Connolly, Concord High School Principal; Tom Crumrine, Concord High School Assistant Principal; Lise Bofinger, Science Department Facilitator, NEASC Co-Chair; Chris Herr, Social Studies Teacher, NEASC Co-Chair

The meeting was called to order at 5:34 p.m.

1. Concord High School science credit requirements

Tom Crumrine and Lise Bofinger provided information about the science graduation requirements as a follow-up to the November 28, 2012 Instructional Committee meeting.

Prior to the 2011-2012 school year, students at Concord High could follow one of two paths to achieving science graduation requirements: a 2-credit option involving Biology in grade 9 and Physical Science in grade 10; or a 3-credit option involving Biology in grade 9, a chemistry course in grade 10 and a physics course in grade 11. For the 3-credit option, students took Biology in grade 9, and selected one of two different chemistry courses (Chemistry, and Chemistry and Its Applications) in grade 10 and one of two physics courses (Mathematical Physics and Conceptual Physics) in grade 11.

Beginning this school year, Physical Science was removed from the course offerings, eliminating the 2-credit science graduation option. Students now are required to earn 3 credits in science to graduate from Concord High by taking biology, chemistry and physics courses. At the November 28 meeting, the committee voted to remove the Chemistry and Its Applications course from the science department offerings. Committee members asked for additional information about whether physics should be the third credit requirement, or whether students should be allowed to select from other department offerings.

Most competitive colleges want students to take three years of high school science, including biology and chemistry. Physics is generally expected for students anticipating a science major in college.

Ms. Bofinger noted that students would not be sufficiently prepared for the state science NECAP test unless they take both chemistry and physics, given the curricula taught in these courses at this time. She described new science standards which are expected to be released in the next year. These standards focus on four domains: life
sciences, physical sciences, earth and space sciences, and engineering and technology. If these standards are adopted by the state, the science department will need time to review them and align their courses.

Ms. Bofinger and Mr. Crumrine recommended that no additional changes be made in science course requirements at this time. Time is needed to review changes in the standards and consider options for students to meet the requirements. Committee members ask that staff monitor the success of students taking physics classes, especially now that 100% of students must pass physics to graduate.

Ms. Bofinger noted that the extended biology and chemistry classes have so far been beneficial for students who need additional support. She would like to consider adding a support class for physics if resources are available.

The committee determined that no action concerning science requirements at Concord High was needed at this time.

2. NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges) Accreditation

Chris Herr provided an overview of the NEASC accreditation process at Concord High. The school is reviewed for accreditation every ten years. Mr. Herr described the seven standards that will be used to evaluate the school. Starting last winter, CHS teachers divided into seven committees based on these standards. Each committee has been gathering and analyzing a variety of evidence related to their standard, and will shortly begin writing reports summarizing their work.

The accreditation process includes two major components: the school’s self-study completed by the seven high school committees and an onsite evaluation by a visiting team. The team will spend four days at the school during the 2013-2014 school year. The school expects to receive a final report from NEASC in March 2014.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Patterson, Chair
Donna Palley, Recorder