

Highlights from the CPS / CCRS School Committee Meeting

Attended by Julia Reichheld

CPS/CCRS Joint Meeting January 24, 2012

Chairs Report

Pam:

- Fin Com hearing on school budget 02/27, 7 pm, at Town House

Peter:

- Has met with Chris Whelan to discuss field maintenance
- Also has met with Chris W. and Danner DeStephano to discuss ways to maximize relationship between schools and Beede Center

Correspondence

Diana reported that, after long process, DESE certified that CCHS is in compliance with SPED regulations

Recognitions

CCHS: Peter Badalament acknowledged Earth Science teacher Ray Pavlik and approximately 20 students for participation with Boston University in a 12-week seminar on structural geology and the tectonic history of New England. Badalament highlighted that the Science department has developed a variety of electives for advanced geology students, even when many local high schools have made decision to abandon earth science in favor of tech science, in an effort to teach to the gr. 9 MCAS.

Reports & Issues for Discussion

A. Transportation Report

- CCHS building project has necessitated move of bus depot, which led to Dec., 2011 transportation survey.
- Diana emphasized that each year, as we go through the budget process, we make decision to focus money on core technologies. With challenging budgetary times, we've been forced to consider cutting back costs for operational expenses. This year, with particularly challenging budget climate, in combination with CCHS building project requiring move of bus depot, prompted another look at transportation.
- Peter Fishelis clarified that this decision will be made by school committee - to clear up any misconceptions that it will be determined by vote at town meeting
- John Flaherty presented Transportation Report. Highlights were as follows:
 - Overview of department: 36 buses and drivers, 3 mechanics, 3 administrators; bus repair and maintenance building; bus parking area; administration building; fuel storage & pumping facility
 - Combined CPS & CCRSD FY2013 transportation budget = \$1,895,120; Combined budgets for benefits = \$290,000; Adds to total cost of \$2,185,120
 - Timeline Highlights:
 - Summer 2011: CCHD building project design and site selection discussion indicate transportation facility may be affected
 - Impact and options assessment initiated
 - August 2011: Administration retains consultant for bid development to outsource bus operations as potential option
 - September 29, 2011: MSBA commits \$28M to \$92.5M CCHS building project with location that impacts transportation facility (this particular site was a required aspect of project approved by state, partly due to soil conditions of other sites, and partly due to need for green building and consideration of solar optimization)
 - October 5, 2011: Transportation staff notified of range of changes being assessed
 - October, 2011: Bus bid specifications developed: specifications required to mirror existing level of service and routes to minimize impact to students and parents and to provide fair cost comparison to school system operation; school system will retain ownership of school bus fleet for future flexibility
 - CPS /CCRSD Transportation Bid Timeline:
 - 11/07/11 Legally required advertisement posted
 - 11/16/11: Mandatory Pre-Bid Meeting Held (12 bus companies attend)

- 12/07/11: Bids are due; 2 companies submit bids
- 12/08/11: Bids are analyzed and “First Student” is determined to be responsive and responsible bidder, with lowest cost of \$1,811,829
- January, 2012: Administration concludes internal assessment of school system operated transportation service delivery options
 - Impact of losing in-house repair capabilities: increased cost of bus repairs (\$215-300K)
 - Shared cost of building in house capabilities determined as \$1.2M to \$1.3M without land cost:
 - Bus Repair Garage = \$400K
 - Paving and Parking Infrastructure = \$375K
 - Fuel Tanks & Pumps = \$225K
 - Relocate or Replace Admin Building = \$185 - \$300K
 - Savings with Contractor Operated Fleet
 - In house Cost Savings = \$2,185,120
 - Contractor Cost Savings = \$1,811,829
 - Total Savings = \$373,291
 - Transportation Report Conclusions:
 - Annual Savings with Contractor \$375K
 - Contractor does not require \$1.2M capital cost
 - FY2013 budgets do not include \$285K for purchasing new buses
- Several questions from school committee members followed John’s presentation
 - Peter F questioned, if intent is to employ 100% of present drivers, how will work conditions be different? John responded that, though he can only speculate, the tier system will mean that some drivers make more money and some less.
 - Maureen S inquired about how Human Resources will handle the transition. John responded that “First Student” would have 2 full time administrative people on site.
 - Peter inquired about where buses will be parked. John indicated that the plan is to spread the spread the buses throughout the system, at each school location, with the exception of Thoreau.
 - Peter inquired about the risks of this possible decision. John responded that the decreased risk is in regard to the budget, with the attempt to mitigate any other risks by decision to maintain ownership of fleet. John added that, if necessary (i.e. with unforeseen problems with a decision to go with an outsourced operation), we’d have time to design and build a new facility
- Numerous comments from transportation department employees and citizens; Highlights / themes included:
 - Parents feeling deceived in process of voting to approve CCHS at town meeting / polls. Feeling that the need to move the bus depot as a result of the building project and the ensuing decision to consider outsourcing busing was not made transparent to citizens.
 - Transportation department employee concerns that the numbers cited don’t take into consideration 6 retiring drivers, for whom health insurance expenses would still be present.
 - Many parents and transportation employees cited the benefits of a locally controlled system, with the ability to maintain control and quality, in addition to the benefit of immediate response when problems (i.e. breakdowns or other needs for buses) occur.
 - Many expressed frustration that the report didn’t cite or take into consideration any other options other than outsourcing busing. Felt that it was a report with a foregone conclusion.
- School committee reminded citizens of PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION FORUM on 02/01/12, 7 pm, at Alcott

B. Rivers and Revolutions Updates

- Presentation by Peter Badalament and CCHS Faculty member Michael Goodwin about CCHS program to begin in September, 2012 for Juniors and Seniors (involving 50 students and 5 faculty members).
- Major additions in plans since last presentation at school committee include creation of assessment program. Highlights of assessment include:

- Faculty members will work with students to assess strengths and weaknesses as learners
 - Each faculty member will oversee portfolio of 10 students in program
 - At conclusion of each unit, that faculty member will meet with each student to assess progress on previously determined goals
 - Each student assessed developmentally - based on progress within course of study and on developmental level
 - Peter commented, based on his own experience and also research: students incredibly honest about own progress / performance; this model is expected to be much more effective in achieving student growth and student motivation
 - Rubrics will be developed by faculty members in program
- Other highlights / updates in program include:
 - Faculty members involved will be announced soon
 - Michael held a Professional Development meeting with various faculty (from various disciplines, and not limited to those interested in immediately becoming part of the program) to have discussion about content of curriculum
 - Within program: each day will begin with 1 hour faculty meeting, with opportunity to develop curriculum and discuss student progress
 - In regard to recruiting students: Michael has been talking to students in cafeteria and expressed that there is a great deal of support and excitement. He acknowledged that this may not translate into all of these students applying for program, due to practical concerns / parent concerns
 - 02/02/12 - Informational session for all interested students and parents; opportunity to get all information in order to make thoughtful decision
 - School committee question about how math will be handled within program. Peter's response cited that they have worked very closely to consider math / science since both have very linear curricula; Michael also emphasized that the math department has created plan for how students will be re-integrated. Peter emphasized that the new Common Core Standards move away from students as algorithmic machine, and toward students as mathematical thinkers and problem solvers, and stated that the program will benefit students to find relevance of math in real world. Finally, Michael stressed that the program's math curricula is conceptual and application based, but still to include skill building necessary for re-integration to standard math curricula
 - School committee question about how students will be chosen. Michael responded that, if it is over-subscribed, acceptance in program will go to lottery. In recruiting students, an intentional attempt has been made to interest diverse student population; they are confident that, just with lottery system (and not more formal application system), diverse student population will be chosen.

Action Items:

A. Gift Acceptance: voted to accept \$1,000 financial donation from Ms. Sandy Nash to benefit the music department at CCHS

B. Anonymous Gift Acceptance for CCHS Building Project: voted to accept anonymous donation of \$15,000 to CCHS Building Project (to be applied toward items not in regular budget)

C. Final Reading and Vote to approve Head Injury Management: voted to approve Head Injury Management plan

D. Vote to approve School Calendars 2012-2013 (CPS / CCHS) - Kelly McCausland, Director of HR, presented issues with 2012-2013 school calendar: if school were to start for teachers after 09/01/11, as it traditionally does, then the last day of school would be 07/02/13, which includes the five mandatory snow days. The calendar committee met and discussed various scenarios. Both teachers unions were consulted and options were discussed with PTG group and administrative team. After much deliberation, the following options were recommended.

- Teachers start on Wed. 08/29/12 and students on Tues. 09/04/12 (both teachers unions and parents were in favor of this option)
- A one year pilot of elimination of three religious holidays (parent group and administration are in favor of this option as a one year pilot; both teachers unions reported being "polarized")

- Elimination of the CCHS Conference Day (recommended due to the accessibility of teachers and the new parent portal, but due to lack of constituent support it is not being recommended at this time)
- FINAL DECISION: School committee voted to accept presented calendar, which reflected the teacher start date of 08/29 and student start date of 09/04, and the one-year pilot of three religious holidays. The CCHS Conference Day was NOT eliminated for the 2012-2013 school year.

E. Vote to award five million dollars BAN sale 01/31/12 to Eastern Bank: voted to approve amounts not being paid by school facilities grant to be covered by issuance of notes and bonds.

Old Business:

CCHS Building Project:

- Architects are fully engaged; in building frequently
- Building committee's most recent meeting was two weeks ago, involving updates on landscape plan; Their upcoming meeting will involve elevations.
- Much of the work involves selecting project manager; 11 initial candidates. After initial meetings, 5 moved forward to be considered.
- Building committee will give recommendation on choice of project manager to school committee.
- Architects are working closely with faculty and staff; recent plans will be posted in Peter Badalament's conference room so that all can see and respond.

Superintendent's Report:

- DESE - Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation: guides are finally published so union teams have been meeting. These will direct evaluations for all with license
 - Purpose of guides are that every educator will assess own performance: will use rubric to evaluate levels of performance; will consider student needs and use wide range of options to assess student growth; will create team goals (i.e by grade level or department)
 - Complex / comprehensive system - 3 phases; will move into phase 1 with CCHS; by 2013 every district is required to have evaluation system in place (so will be district wide at that point)
 - Diana's recommendation is to adopt system for three years, gathering own data to assess at end of three years (each district has choice whether to adopt as is or to adapt)
 - Diana's suggestion is that school committee use rubric to evaluate her performance in order to provide model for faculty members to use rubrics supplied to be assessed
- Tomorrow, Wed. 01/25/12 - No Name-Calling Day: Governor Patrick established fourth Wed. in January as no-name calling day in order to address issue of bullying

Reminder about Forum regarding Bus Outsourcing next Wed. 02/01/12 at Alcott School - 7 pm