

OFFICIAL

CUMBERLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 21, 2008

MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Cumberland School Committee held on Thursday, February 21, 2008, at the Cumberland High School Auditorium, 2600 Mendon Road, Cumberland, RI, at 7:50 p.m., was called to order by Chairman Frederic C. Crowley, with the following present:

**Frederick C. Crowley, Chair, Donald J. Costa, Vice Chair, Lisa Beaulieu, Robert C. Thibodeau,
Wayne D. Wagner, Earl T. Wood**

Also Present: Donna A. Morelle, Ed.D., Superintendent; Susan C. Carney, Ph.D., Assistant Superintendent; Joseph A. Rotella, Esq., Director of Administration

Absent: Karen MacBeth, Clerk

**I. Approval of Agenda – On a motion by Mr. Wagner, and a second by Ms. Beaulieu, it was VOTED
6-0 TO APPROVE the agenda.**

II. Vote to Approve Non-Renewals – On a motion by Mr. Wagner, and a

second by Ms. Beaulieu, it was VOTED 6-0 TO APPROVE tabling.

III. Personnel Recommendations – On a motion by Mr. Wagner, and a second by Ms. Beaulieu, it was VOTED 6-0 TO APPROVE tabling.

IV. FY 2008-2009 Budget Workshop

A. Discussion and Vote – The Superintendent gave some background information on the budget recommendations, noting tonight’s presentation is focused on the staffing analysis and personnel recommendations. She stated they:1) discussed student needs and district initiatives that need financial support; 2) created the awareness of the state and local fiscal issue; 3) overall key budget drives for 100% of the students 100% of the time. She pointed out the rigor of instruction is what leads them to student excellence and they are focusing on academic excellence. Dr. Morelle stated she has attempted to present a zero based budget and explained the development of the budget. There is a 1.83% increase over last year’s budget for \$52,352,188. They are working on healthcare, transportation containment and tonight’s concentration on personnel and staffing analysis. She noted the approval of the retirement incentive at the last school committee meeting.

The Superintendent presented an organizational chart and under the Assistant Superintendent there is a new position of District Literacy Coach. She noted she is not recommending the funding of a new elementary assistant principal at Community School next year, but

there is a .5 clerical position to offset that.

The Superintendent reported the relocation of the Pre-School to BF Norton would allow a 15-1 class size, resulting in the number of teachers and teacher assistants from five to four. One of the school-nurse teachers could be eliminated. And there would no longer be the need for a .5 custodian and the clerical responsibilities could be taken on by the secretary in the building or by the principal. Ms. Colwell explained some of the responsibilities of Child Outreach for 3, 4 and 5 year olds. Dr. Morelle explained that BF Norton is a Needs Improvement school, so keeping the Pre-School principal after relocating would allow the BF Norton Principal to concentrate on that.

The Superintendent showed elementary enrollment for 2007-2008 is 2,168 and projected for 2008-2009, 2,124. She is seeking approval of 91 FTE positions for 2008-2009. She noted the associated positions in the areas, i.e., art, music. There won't be a request for an approval of those 91 positions until the Space Utilization Task Force recommendations are made.

Mr. Kenworthy reported one of the recommendations from the recent SALT visit is to look at the middle school schedule. Currently there are seven periods of 40+ minutes and the middle school reform recommends six periods of 57 minutes. Mr. Kenworthy explained they will increase contact time in the core subjects, decrease the contact time for 7th and 8th students in world languages and increase

support for students struggling in reading.

Cumberland School Committee

February 21, 2008/Minutes -2-

Mr. Pires noted that once students are reading at grade level they will be moved into world languages and explained the unified art schedule. The Superintendent explained they need to work on some of the recommendations from the SALT visit to avoid receiving the same recommendations at McCourt's visit. Mr. Costa asked about any contract obligations and Mr. Rotella explained everyone would retain their rights and the only requirement is the March first deadline for non-renewals. The Superintendent noted they need an authentic middle school model for instruction. The Assistant Superintendent commented they are aware of the importance of rigor and advanced placement at the high school.

At the high school, they are working to meet the high school diploma system and meet the NEASC recommendation to achieve accreditation status. Dr. Gould reported they are looking at some of the priorities and trying to make the school student friendly by finding out in what subjects they would be interested. They are looking at decreasing staff by two FTEs, but they are not sure where, stating it depends on student interest. Fine arts and technical ed will be combined to become the fine and applied technical arts, resulting in one department head. Mr. Thibodeau asked about sending

students to Davies. The Superintendent responded they would need to meet with legislators about a state funded system for technical education. She noted she did not include the request for an additional science teacher.

The Superintendent reported there was a minor reduction in special education in 2005. The number of students with IEPs has been going down and as of January 2008, there are approximately 1,000 students.

Ms. Colwell described a new transition program for students at the high school who are technically grade 12, but will require additional education services. Some of those students would be ones who might stay until they are 21. The program will allow students to stay in their own community and to build capacity within the district. In the budget is the purchase of a van in order to transport them and they will need a job coach with a chauffeur's license. The alternative would be to place these students out of the district. There would be approximately ten students. Mr. Wood requested a breakdown to start this program.

The Superintendent reported there are 1,180 participants (not different individuals) in 50 sports. They are recommending maintaining varsity and JV sports, including lacrosse and the middle school programs. She is recommended eliminating freshman sports and reducing the athletic budget by \$35,000. It is also noted to fund raise and seek donations of \$35,000. Mr. Geiselman commented the elimination of freshman sports is there only because the budget has

to be reduced. He felt the middle school needed the activities and that freshman will be able to participate on either JV or varsity sports.

The Superintendent noted the Athletic Director should be full time but is not in the budget. Mr. Thibodeau suggested the Town doesn't have a recreation director and might be worth having a discussion with the Mayor to combine the positions. Mr. Wood asked if there was a plan for fund raising and Dr. Morelle explained this is a signal for the community that there is not enough funding to support all the athletics. She stated the first priority is to maintain academic programs.

The Superintendent explained they have increased the square footage for responsibilities for custodians with an overall reduction of three positions in custodial staffing. Mr. Hilton explained he used the number of 20,000 square feet per the National Association Professional Property Administrators. He noted Cumberland doesn't have automation and is still using buckets, mops and ringers. This year they expanded the square footage to 30,000 square feet. They would simply clean the restrooms, broom cleaning the floors and dumping trash. There would be a half time reduction at BF Norton, Community, Garvin and McCourt, plus the reduction of a full time custodian at the high school. Mr. Costa stated he couldn't support cutting three custodians, that this is the flagship of Cumberland. The Superintendent stated she was looking for guidance from the committee, that she needs to know where to balance the budget. The Superintendent also noted they are looking to eliminate the day

custodian supervisory position. Mr. Thibodeau suggested looking into privatization. The Chair noted he couldn't support the reduction either. The Assistant Superintendent stated she has been through tax cap legislation and you have to make choices that you otherwise would not make. The landscape is going look differently; you aren't going to be enjoying what you have all along. She noted there isn't just the state tax cap, but the town's self-imposed tax cap.

Cumberland School Committee

February 21, 2008/Minutes -3-

Mr. Wagner commented they need to look at the budget and if something is put back, where does it come from. He did suggest looking at department chairs. Mr. Thibodeau also noted the bond indebtedness. Ms. Beaulieu stated this budget will bring the school to its knees and hoped they didn't lose the primary focus of why they are there, for the students.

V. Adjournment –On a motion by Mr. Wagner, and a second by Mr. Thibodeau, it was VOTED 6-0 TO APPROVE adjourning at 10:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley Harris

Recording Secretary

Approved by the School Committee March 13, 2008