

JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Concord-Carlisle School Committee
Concord School Committee
November 6, 2024

Present: Julie Viola, Chair; CCSC
Brian Waterson, CCSC
Carrie Rankin, Chair CSC; CCSC
Alexa Anderson, Vice Chair CCSC; CSC
Andrew Herchek, CSC; CCSC
Cynthia Rainey, CSC; CCSC
Domingos DeRosa, CCRSD METCO Rep

Absent: Ayesha Lawson, CPS METCO Rep
Tracey Marano, CSC; CCSC

Present from Administration: Dr. Laurie Hunter, Superintendent of School, CPS & CCRSD
Robert Conry, Asst. Supt. of Finance & Operations, CPS & CCRSD
Shelly Chin, Interim Assistant Superintendent, CPS & CCRSD

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Viola called the Concord-Carlisle Regional School District to order at 6:01 PM. Ms. Rankin called the Concord School Committee meeting to order at 6:01 PM. Roll call was taken: Anderson, aye; Herchek, aye; Rainey, aye; Rankin, aye; Viola, aye; Waterson, aye.

II. CCHS STUDENT UPDATE

Felicity Zhang and Zariah Alves provided an update on recent activities and events at CCHS including the school's successful production of "Trap"; students have been actively engaged in discussions about the recent election, focusing on values, morals, and the importance of respectful dialogue with those holding differing viewpoints; Halloween activities; a visit from Japanese exchange students; the senior photoshoot; a melanoma assembly; and MMEA Senior District auditions. Though Fall sports are winding down, the Soccer team recently celebrated their division title.

November 1st marked two milestones 1) Round 1 submissions of early college applications and 2) the conclusion of first quarter. Looking ahead, students are excited for the first band and choral concerts of the year and Fall Spirit Week, which is being planned by the Student Senate for the week of Thanksgiving.

III. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Dr. Hunter noted the district welcomed the Japanese exchange students from Nanae last week and hosted a Civic Fair, with seventy students pitching their projects. Discussions began about early literacy, with a focus on grades 3-5, and the district's goal is to implement a K-5 literacy program. The state commissioner stated, unless the legislature takes up the topic, districts may have to revert to COVID-style procedures and administer tests to students who must pass or have the option to retest.

IV. DISCUSSIONS

A. School Committee Goals Update

The Committee successfully addressed two key SMART goals within the Student Achievement and Success category, fulfilled by Ms. Shelly Chin's presentation on Academic Data Overview. The first SMART goal achieved was to benchmark and review AP class participation and offerings through an equitable lens to identify achievement gaps, including a review of K-8 IEP data. The second SMART goal centered on the semi-annual update of the DEIB Strategic Plan to examine existing achievement gaps, identify areas of strength, and pinpoint areas requiring improvement.

B. Q1 FY25 CPS Budget Transfers (VOTE)

Mr. Conry presented the first quarter budget transfers and noted the district faces some financial challenges, such as increased out-of-district tuition costs. The district is expected to mitigate additional expenses through circuit breaker funds and the IDA special education grant. To date, minimal budget transfers have been necessary, but the adjusted balance doesn't fully account for future expenses, such as maintenance and substitute teacher costs.

Ms. Rainey moved, and Ms. Anderson seconded the motion to approve the budget transfers as presented. Roll call attendance was taken: Anderson, aye; Herchek, aye; Rainey, aye; Rankin, aye; Viola, aye; Waterson, aye.

C. Q1 FY25 CCRSD Budget Transfers (VOTE)

Mr. Conry reviewed the first-quarter budget transfers, highlighting one instance where an early retirement led to budget savings, and to maintain a financial reserve, the position will remain vacant. Additionally, reduced staff contributions to social security resulted in annual savings of \$55,000. Mr. Conry and Dr. Hunter are working to identify and plan for future budgetary requirements and cost-saving opportunities, which may be identified within the operating budget. Rather than immediate savings, the district prioritizes maintaining a reserve fund to serve as a readily accessible resource to address unexpected needs and prevent potential financial shortfalls.

Mr. Waterson moved, and Mr. Herchek seconded the motion to approve the budget transfers as presented. Roll call attendance was taken: Anderson, aye; Herchek, aye; Rainey, aye; Rankin, aye; Viola, aye; Waterson, aye.

D. 250th Tree Locations

Christa Collins of the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition presented a plan to install trees on various Concord school campuses. Working with Concord Public Works, she developed a map identifying specific locations for tree installation at Concord-Carlisle High School and the elementary schools: Alcott, Ripley, Thoreau, and Willard. Due to logistical challenges, the middle school was excluded from this initiative. The selected tree locations are strategically chosen to shade impervious areas, providing relief from the sun and heat. The tree planting is scheduled for the spring, following the selection of a contractor who will handle installation and two years of maintenance. Afterward, Concord Public Works will assume long-term maintenance responsibilities.

Approximately 150 trees are planned for planting. Funding for this project will come from various sources, including community preservation funds, Middlesex schools, fundraising efforts, private school contributions, and private donations. The overall goal is to raise \$400,000.

E. Academic Data Overview

Shelly Chin presented a benchmark view of the Spring 2024 Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) and State Accountability results. The presentation highlighted achievement level percentages and student growth over time, demonstrating how students perform at their grade level.

Our schools perform among the top 10% in the state for meeting or exceeding targets, out of over 1,500 schools. While there is some variability between schools due to factors like student population, special education needs, and other variables, K-8 schools have shown consistent growth across all levels, including special education and regular curriculum. The number of students in AP courses and taking AP exams continues to grow, and the exam pass rate is currently 93.62%. This rate shows if you offer a challenging curriculum, engaging learning, and rigorous instruction, students will thrive. The committee requested an analysis to examine the percentage of students participating in AP classes, the number of AP exams taken, and DEI percentages.

F. Campus Completion Update

Mr. Waterson provided an update on the progress of campus construction. A list of potential fundraising team members has been compiled. The committee will pursue ADA compliance grants, state grants, and local grants for both the amenities building and the track. The fundraising campaign will focus on the need for an ADA-compliant amenities building and a new track, which will benefit the school and local community.

G. Concord Public School Budget Update

Dr. Hunter met with the Town Manager, who suggested that the November 18th Select Board meeting be used as an opportunity for both the town and the schools to present their budget requests. This will allow for a shared understanding of each entity's needs and priorities.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Mike Williams, 1284 Sudbury Road, Concord MA stated he felt scolded by the superintendent and threatened by the committee's chair with having his microphone muted. In response, he filed an open meeting law complaint against the committee.
2. Craig Miller, 27 Lang Street, Concord MA discussed his distrust in the committee because he felt his vote for the middle school's name was not considered.
3. Bonnie Levine, 149 Stowe Street, Concord MA Suggested more involvement of the METCO representatives at the meetings and emphasized the importance of improving relationships with METCO students and families.

4. **CONSENT AGENDA**

A. Policy Approval - I Policies

B. Warrants

1. CPS A/P

1043	10/24/24	\$423,360.56
1044	10/31/24	\$257,353.56
1045	10/31/24	\$223,019.79
1039	9/30/24	\$2.45

2. CCRSD A/P

1093	10/25/24	\$959,853.14
1095	10/25/24	\$30,108.75

3. CPA

Payroll	10/24/24	\$1,764.74
Pay date	10/24/24	\$379,297.30
Pay date	10/24/24	\$219,686.24

4. CCRSD

Payroll		
Pay date	10/24/24	\$15,836.08
Pay date	10/24/24	\$638,264.57
Pay date	10/24/24	\$76,037.24
Pay date	10/24/24	\$179,810.24
Pay date`	10/24/24	\$44,878.45
Pay date	10/24/24	\$3,906.96

Ms. Rankin moved, and Mr. Herchek seconded the motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Roll call was taken: Anderson, aye; Herchek, aye; Rainey, aye; Rankin, aye; Viola, aye; Waterson, aye.

5. **CORRESPONDENCE**

Correspondence received included a poem sent to both districts; an invitation to the CMS student civic action project showcase; and a request for sponsorship from the CPAC group for an upcoming event.

6. **CHAIRS AND LIAISONS UPDATE**

Ms. Viola thanked Ms. Marano for being actively involved in attending Select Board meetings. Both have been working to clarify the roles and responsibilities of various parties, especially regarding the Doug White Fields and the potential turf replacement project.

Ms. Rainey and Ms. Marano attended the Climate Action Board meeting, and one topic was the turf replacement. The Board noted the Select Board and Recreation Commission are responsible for the turf and they obtained a \$100k grant for a study on turf replacement.

Ms. Rankin noted FINCOM has been sending questions via email and she will forward them to the committee. The district has a Policy Subcommittee Meeting next Wednesday, November 13th at 8:30 AM.

Ms. Viola attended the first PA meeting for the high school, and she appreciated hearing all the work going on by the parents. Ms. Viola, and other members, met with FINCOM and have been addressing all the questions.

7. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ms. Anderson moved, and Ms. Rainey seconded the motion that the Concord School Committee and Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committee will enter Executive Session under Purpose 2 of the Open Meeting Law: To conduct strategy sessions in preparations for negotiations with the Superintendent of Schools, and purpose seven to comply with or act under authority of any general or special law or federal grant in aid requirements specifically MGL 30 section 22 A and F with regard to review and approval of executive session minutes from October 8, 2024 and we will not return to Open Session. Anderson, aye for both; Herchek, aye for both; Rainey, aye for both; Rankin, aye for both; Viola, aye for the region; Waterson, aye for the region.

Executive Session was called at 7:53 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Gilmore

Approved: 12.10.24

Abbreviations:

CCHS Concord-Carlisle High School
CCRS Concord-Carlisle Regional School District
CCSC Concord-Carlisle Regional District School Committee
CCTA Concord-Carlisle Teachers' Association
CEF Concord Education Fund
CMS Concord Middle School
CMSBC Concord Middle School Building Committee
COAR Communities Organizing Against Racism
CPC Community Preservation Committee
CPS Concord Public Schools
CSC Concord School Committee
CTA Concord Teachers Association
DEIB Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging
DHCB Department of Housing and Community Development
ESSER Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund
FINCOM Finance Committee
LEAP Learning Executive and Academic Processes
MTSS Multi-Tiered System of Supports
PD Professional Development
SC School Committee
SEPAC Special Education Parent Advisory Council
WRAP Writing, Reading, and Academic Processes

YRBS Youth Risk Behavior Survey