

JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

**Concord-Carlisle School Committee
Concord School Committee
December 10, 2024**

Present: Julie Viola, Chair; CCSC
Brian Waterson, CCSC
Carrie Rankin, Chair CSC; CCSC
Alexa Anderson, Vice Chair CCSC; CSC
Andrew Herchek, CSC; CCSC
Tracey Marano, CSC; CCSC

Absent: Ayesha Lawson, CPS METCO Rep
Cynthia Rainey, 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 – CONCORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Ms. Viola called the Joint Concord Carlisle School Committee (CCSC) to order at 6:00 PM. Ms. Rankin called the Concord School Committee (CSC) to order at 6:00 PM. Roll call was taken: Anderson, aye; Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rankin, aye; Viola, aye; and Waterson, aye.

II. CCHS STUDENT UPDATE

High school committee members Zariah Alves, Felicity Zhang, and Maddie Clancy presented updates on student events and activities. During Thanksgiving week, the class government hosted a senior luncheon that served 130 senior citizens; the South Asian Student Society held Diwali celebrations; and the high school held a Spirit Assembly.

Holiday performing arts festivities kicked off with the Concord Tree lighting, where the chorus performed; the chorus is also hosting pop-up events before the holidays; and this weekend is the popular art event hosted by students, Prism 24. Before the holiday break, there are bake sales and drives, including donations of coats and backpacks; the winter sport season starts; and everyone is looking forward to sharing their ugly sweaters on the last Fun Friday of 2024!

III. SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOALS

Ms. Viola presented the goal tracker, and the committee reviewed the progress since the start of the school year. Goal 1 through Goal 6 is on track, but some items will be revisited at a future meeting including the YRBS Report analysis and results; the achievement gaps and benchmark process; and the DEIB review. The dates for the Parent Coffees are being finalized and will be promoted through Instagram and PTGs.

Ms. Anderson provided an update on Goal 7, the CCHS Campus Completion Plan and the municipal grant for ADA compliance. Unfortunately, we do not qualify because the grant is limited to upgrades of existing structures and does not cover new construction. She has

been researching grants and potential funding sources, including CPC funds and ARPA funds, for the Amenities Building and campus completion project. CPC funds can be used for projects that support recreational facilities, such as the proposed building. While Concord typically grants CPC funds once a year, Massachusetts law allows for rolling applications. It's worth noting that the fields are used 70% of the time by the community and only 30% by the high school. We are waiting for information from the town manager regarding the potential allocation of unused ARPA funds.

Mr. Waterson emphasized that the committee must have a clear approach and a concrete vision for the bathroom design before seeking funding from non-profit organizations or foundations.

IV. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence for the Concord Public School.

The Concord-Carlisle Regional School District received a note of appreciation for Mrs. Hammer, a valued employee at the high school front desk, sending her best wishes on her upcoming retirement. Additionally, the district received an inquiry with basic questions about the Amenities Building project.

V. SUPERINTENDENT UPDATE

Dr. Hunter presented her Superintendent Update noting tomorrow is a professional development day, designed to follow up on the topics from earlier in the Fall; Mr. Conry is diligently working on the budget, which will be presented at the January meeting; the middle school construction is near completion, and the goal is to have classroom access by mid-January for furniture deliveries, and opening the building to students, parents, and the community during the February break.

Dr. Hunter met with Ayesha Lawson, METCO parents, and METCO professional leaders to discuss community engagement goals and addressing broader issues like the achievement gap. Ms. Chin has been doing an excellent job developing the K-5 ELA curriculum, a groundbreaking achievement. Many exciting student events, school assemblies, and concerts are contributing to a positive holiday atmosphere and a fun end to the year.

VI. DISCUSSION

- A. CMLP - Concord Middle School Solar Project was moved to end of meeting.
- B. Policies
 - 1. ACA-R
 - 2. ACAB
 - 3. ACGA
 - 4. BDBC

The committee discussed Title IX policies and the potential changes to federal regulations; and the need to fill the vacant METCO representative position. Ayesha Lawson is interested in the role, and the committee is recommending adding the following as the last line in Policy BDBC, 'Should the METCO PTG not be active, the School Committee will run an interim election.'

Ms. Anderson moved, and the motion was seconded by Ms. Rankin to approve the Policy ACA-R; Policy ACAB; Policy ACGA; and Policy BDBC, with the amended last line added, 'Should the METCO PTG not be active, the School Committee will run an interim election.' Roll call was taken: Anderson, aye; Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rankin, aye; Viola, aye; and Waterson, aye.

C. Capital Updates and Amenities Building Options (Vote)

Mr. Conry presented the CPS capital plan including the funding deferral of the ADA Accessibility signage at Alcott; and the repairs to the Alcott, Ripley, and Willard building exteriors. Items still included in the capital plan are the irrigation site improvements at CMS; office copier equipment; an HVAC Split system for the IT server room; the Thoreau roof; and upgrading district electronic devices and technology.

The Amenities Building presentation was reviewed showing five different options. Option 2 was shelved because of its expense; Options 1A, 1B, 3A, and 3B were considered but after a brief discussion, the preferred build was Option 3A: CMU design/bid/build was chosen for its overall design, lifetime cost savings, and all elements meet MA code and school standard.

Ms. Anderson moved, and the motion was seconded by Ms. Marano to authorize the district to approve the Amenities Building design Option 3A CMU design/bid/build. Roll call was taken: Anderson, aye; Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rankin, aye; Viola, aye; and Waterson, aye.

D. Concord Finance Committee Guideline

Ms. Rankin attended the Concord FINCOM meeting held to set preliminary budget guidelines for the upcoming fiscal year. Concord has an overall budget increase of 2.44%, with a 1.81% increase for the Concord Public Schools (CPS) and a 3.48% increase for Concord-Carlisle High School (CCHS). The final guidelines will be released on November 19th, and it may impact our school budgets. The FINCOM committee is emphasizing transparency and encouraging community participation in the budget process.

E. Superintendent Contract Renewal (Vote)

Ms. Rankin presented a synopsis of the school committee discussions on the contract renewal for Dr. Hunter, the superintendent. The committee praised her leadership and dedication, highlighting her ability to navigate challenges such as the pandemic and budget constraints. They also recognized her role in building a strong leadership team and prioritizing student well-being. The committee approved a 5-year contract with a 5% increase for the first year, plus a 3% cost-of-living adjustment.

Mr. Waterson moved, and the motion was seconded by Ms. Romano to approve the Superintendent Contract Renewal as presented. Roll call was taken: Anderson, aye; Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rankin, aye; Viola, aye; and Waterson, aye.

F. CPS & CCRSD Bus Lease (Vote)

Mr. Conry presented a resolution to the Concord School to acquire new buses for both Concord Public Schools (CPS) and Concord-Carlisle Regional School District (CCRSD). The five-year lease has a 4.5% interest rate and a total cost of approximately \$320,000, net of

trade-ins. This will replace aging buses and improve the reliability of the school district's transportation fleet.

Ms. Marano moved, and the motion was seconded by Ms. Anderson to adopt and approve the Concord Public School Bus Lease Resolution, Exhibit A, for Concord Public Schools as presented. Roll call was taken: Anderson, aye; Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rankin, aye; Viola, aye; and Waterson, aye.

Ms. Marano moved, and the motion was seconded by Mr. Waterson to adopt and approve the Concord-Carlisle Regional School District Bus Lease as presented. Roll call was taken: Anderson, aye; Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rankin, aye; Viola, aye; and Waterson, aye.

VII. Public Comment

1. Michael Williams, 1284 Sudbury Road, Concord, MA acknowledged he received the response from the committee regarding his open meeting law complaint. Mr. Williams expressed concerns about the Superintendent and Committee's handling of issues related to the METCO families, particularly the Superintendent's refusal to meet with parents. He questioned the committee's decision to form a select body of parents to advise on METCO issues, arguing that it was anti-democratic. Mr. Williams questioned the disparities in academic performance based on race and ethnicity, as evidenced by AP exam data. He is disappointed that the committee's focus on school naming overshadowed issues of equity and inclusion, and he called on the committee to address these issues more effectively and prioritize the needs of all students.

2. Craig Awmiller, 27 Lang Street, Concord, MA expressed disappointment with the administration citing recent events involving METCO and the school naming decision as particular concerns. He questioned the administration's trustworthiness and its ability to foster a strong connection with the community. He suggested the administration prioritize transparency and work towards rebuilding trust with the community.

3. Domingos DeRosa, 1569 River Street, Boston, MA stated he resigned as the CCRSD METCO representative last week after three frustrating years where he felt overlooked and silenced. Mr. De Rosa criticized the Superintendent and Committee for their lack of progress in addressing racial issues, including the recent issue in the boy's bathroom; the treatment of METCO students; the lack of support for all students of color; and he questioned the effectiveness of the current leadership calling for real change and accountability.

4. Wilson Kerr, 20 Damon Street, Concord, MA expressed his support for Dr. Hunter, noting the positive relationships she has built with both the community and the teaching staff. He commended Dr. Hunter for her hard work during the COVID-19 pandemic, when she successfully brought students back to school. Parents praised her leadership and decision-making during this challenging time. Mr. Kirby emphasized that true leadership involves guiding others towards success and thanked Dr. Hunter for her dedication.

5. Pat Brewer, 132 Wright Rd., Concord, MA. Notes she asked about METCO representative years ago and supported them being part of the district. But she expressed concern about the recent loss of two representatives, the dissolving of the METCO PTG, and

the turnover of two METCO directors in three years. She asked the committee to address the loss of METCO representation and the weakened relationship between the district and the METCO community. The METCO PTG felt marginalized, unseen, unheard, and overlooked. What lessons can the committee learn from this experience?

6. Margaret Schumacher, 25 Highland Street, Concord, MA expressed concern about the recent decision to move the public comment section to the end of the meeting. She questioned the rationale behind this change and raised concerns that it could be a deliberate attempt to limit public scrutiny. She argued that the purpose of public comment is to allow for public input and oversight and moving it to the end of the meeting could undermine this intent.

VIII. CHAIRS AND LIAISONS UPDATE

Ms. Rankin met with the MCI Advisory commission about the long-term land development project that includes 51 acres. The addition of housing will have a potential implication for Concord schools, especially enrollment. The school committee expressed interest in having a representative on the advisory board and Ms. Anderson accepted the role as liaison. The Thoreau Playground Fundraiser is off to a great start with forty-one donors, and it has also raised \$270,000.

Ms. Viola participated in School Tours and Collaboration, touring different Concord schools to gain a deeper understanding of each school's programs and identify potential opportunities for collaboration. She toured the Launch Space to explore ways to support students and potentially generate revenue. Ms. Viola has been reviewing the YRBS results and is considering strategies to address identified issues. She has also attended Concord-Carlisle High School Parent Association meetings and encouraged parents to attend.

Ms. Marano attended Open Meeting Law training to enhance her understanding of open meeting law requirements. She attended the Select Board meeting, where they discussed the landfill cell tower project and announced that a RFP would shortly be released. The DEI Commission is hosting a coffee tomorrow at 1 PM at the Goodwin Forum.

Mr. Waterson reported that a joint meeting of the Select Board and Finance Committee will be held to discuss the Fiscal Year 2026 budget. The CCSC is exploring collaborative opportunities, particularly in the areas of special education and facility utilization.

IX. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Joint Minutes October 8, 2024
- B. Joint Minutes October 22, 2024
- C. Joint Minutes November 6, 2024
- D. Accept Donation of Epson Brightlink Projector
- E. Staff Enrollment Requests
- F. Warrants

- 1. CPS A/P
 - 1051 11/21/24 \$373,339.31

	1055	12/5/24	\$398,391.04
	1059	12/5/24	\$188.64
2.	CCRSD A/P		
	1117	7/8/24	\$76,000.00
	1118	8/26/24	\$19,275.00
	1119	8/19/24	\$5,000.00
	1120	8/6/24	\$13.00
	1121	11/21/24	\$356,734.83
	1122	11/20/24	\$196,986.22
	1124	11/21/24	\$35,635.25
	1129	9/09/24	\$293,312.50
	1130	9/30/24	\$2,169.16
	1131	10/7/24	\$1,128.50
	1132	10/11/24	\$277.75
	1136	10/11/24	\$171.39
	1140	11/8/24	\$2,180.36
	1141	12/5/24	\$486,943.00
	1142	10/1/24	\$1,326,722.50
3.	CPS Payroll		
	Pay date	11/21/24	\$373,277.62
	Pay date	11/21/24	\$374,846.53
	Pay date	11/21/24	\$228,005.66
	Pay date	12/5/24	\$230,216.92
	Pay date	12/5/24	\$2,000.62
	Pay date	12/5/24	\$373,755.83
4.	CCRSD Payroll		
	Pay date	11/21/24	\$67,932.07
	Pay date	11/21/24	\$5,462.01
	Pay date	11/21/24	\$17,459.47
	Pay date	11/21/24	\$3,183.36
	Pay date	11/21/24	\$15,836.08
	Pay date	11/21/24	\$628,081.84
	Pay date	11/21/24	\$76,005.21
	Pay date	11/21/24	\$175,872.80
	Pay date	11/21/24	\$44,229.71
	Pay date	12/5/24	\$273,307.93
	Pay date	12/5/24	\$262,531.03
	Pay date	12/5/24	\$625,354.46
	Pay date	12/5/24	\$76,063.38
	Pay date	12/5/24	\$175,605.64
	Pay date	12/5/24	\$43,894.58

Pay date	12/5/24	\$211.94
Pay date	12/5/24	\$138.52

Mr. Waterson moved, and the motion was seconded by Ms. Romano to approve the consent agenda as presented. Roll call was taken: Anderson, aye; Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rankin, aye; Viola, aye; and Waterson, aye.

X. Adjournment

Mr. Waterson moved, and the motion was seconded by Ms. Anderson to adjourn the CCRSD meeting at 7:55 PM. Roll call was taken: Anderson, aye; Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rankin, aye; Viola, aye; and Waterson, aye.

XI. Discussion

A. CMLP - Concord Middle School Solar Project

Jason Bulger, Director of Concord Municipal Light Plant (CMLP), addressed the Concord Public School Committee. Concord prioritizes clean energy, and the new Concord Middle School project aims to be a net-zero building, powered by solar energy. CMLP is overseeing the solar installation, which includes both rooftop and canopy solar panels. The canopy solar panels require a battery storage system to manage excess energy and represents a significant investment and raises concerns about safety, cost, and potential environmental impacts.

The project team is considering a phased approach. The initial phase would involve installing the rooftop solar panels, which can operate without a battery. The canopy solar panels and battery system could be added in a later phase, depending on factors such as cost, technological advancements, and community preferences.

There are key considerations on the battery system including safety and ensuring the battery system is installed and operated, to minimize risks of fire or explosion; the cost and evaluating the financial feasibility of the battery system and its impact on electricity rates; the technology and considering the alternative battery technologies, such as zinc-ion; and the optimal location for the battery system, balancing factors like proximity to the solar panels and potential environmental impact.

XII. Adjournment

Ms. Rankin moved, and Mr. Herchek seconded the motion to adjourn the CSC meeting at 8:49 PM. Roll call was taken: Anderson, aye; Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rankin, aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Gilmore

Approved: January 7, 2025

Abbreviations:

CCHS Concord-Carlisle High School

CCRSD 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