

**JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES Concord-Carlisle School Committee
Concord School Committee
January 21, 2025**

Present: Julie Viola, Chair; CCSC
Alexa Anderson, Vice Chair CCSC; CSC
Brian Waterson, CCSC
Carrie Rankin, Chair CSC; CCSC
Andrew Herchek, CSC; CCSC
Tracey Marano, CSC; CCSC
Cynthia Rainey, CSC; CCSC
Ayesha Lawton, CSC METCO Rep

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 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; Rainey, aye; Rankin, aye; Viola, aye; Waterson, aye.

II. CCHS STUDENT UPDATE

There was no student update because schools were closed today for staff professional development.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

1. Michael Williams, 1284 Sudbury Road, Concord, MA commented on the Ellen Garrison Middle School that will soon welcome students. Ellen Garrison traveled to Altadena, California and was buried in Mountainview Cemetery in Altadena. The cemetery was spared from the fires that impacted the local community. In honor of both Ellen Garrison and the local Altadena community, our sister community, there will be an Altadena Fire Relief fundraiser held on February 2nd at 3 PM at Ward Hall. Mr. Williams distributed informational flyers and asked the committee to share the flyers and event with the community.
2. Ann Schaffer, 40 Mill Run Lane, Concord, MA expressed her concern about the METCO representation within the district. She is troubled by the problems in the high school and would like to see the district fix the break of communication and support. Her children went through the METCO program, made lifelong friends, and benefited greatly from the METCO program.

IV. DISCUSSION

A. METCO Updates: METCO CEO Milly Arbaje-Thomas

Ms. Arbaje-Thomas, CEO and President of METCO Inc., outlined the history and growth of METCO, and acknowledge its ongoing commitment to achieving racial integration goals; the varying number of METCO students across districts; and that each district receives \$8,000 in state funding per METCO student.

Focusing on our district, Ms. Arbaje-Thomas met with some of the 120 METCO students who shared positive feedback regarding their classes and the current METCO Director. Ms. Arbaje-Thomas commended the district's DEI sub-committee for establishing effective protocols and she recognized the district as a best practice example, particularly for its prompt response to issues and transparent communication with schools and parents.

Ms. Arbaje-Thomas shared best practices from other METCO districts, including early arrival tutoring, math cafes, and targeted literacy programs. She stressed the importance of data-driven approaches to identify and address the specific needs of METCO students. Furthermore, she emphasized the need for increased professional development on equity and inclusion, along with a review of curriculum for inclusivity. Ms. Arbaje-Thomas suggested that METCO could advocate for legislation to increase the number of students attending Concord, recognizing the mutual benefits of a more diverse student body.

B. DEIB Updates: DEIB Director Andrew Nyamekye

Andrew Nyamekye, Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging for the Concord Public School and Concord-Carlisle School District, shared DESE's educational vision statement. This statement emphasizes that all students in Massachusetts, particularly those from historically underserved groups and communities, will have equitable opportunities to excel in all content areas across all grades. This includes ensuring that all students' cultural and linguistic needs are met. The district will prioritize open communication and collaboration among all stakeholders. To effectively communicate its DEIB efforts to the broader community.

Director Nyamekye outlined his goals including supporting the launch of a bias incident response protocol and reporting form; advancing the success of students of color and low-income students in the Trillium Calculus Project (TCP); fostering diversity, inclusion, and belonging through the selection and use of literature texts; increasing teacher diversification and providing ongoing professional development opportunities related to equity and inclusion; ensuring DEIB goals are aligned across all school improvement plans.

Ms. Arbaje-Thomas and Director Nyamekye held a brief discussion on the success of the school district in its efforts for equitable education. They emphasized the creation of learning environments where all students, especially those from historically underserved groups, feel a sense of belonging. The district has a diverse and inclusive curriculum, access to rigorous academic programs, offers professional development on equity and inclusion, and utilizes data to inform targeted interventions that address inequities. METCO will be lobbying the legislature on March 20th for an additional \$3.2 million of funding to help support the program.

C. FY25 CCRSD Second Quarter Budget Update (Vote)

Mr. Conry presented the FY25 CCRSD Second Quarter Budget Update. The current budget is \$38,974,907 and the priority each year is to consider the potential impact of budget decisions on future financial stability. Year-to-date savings were achieved from unfilled positions, staff retirements, staff resignations, and reduced special education staffing needs. But spending has increased due to rising costs on out-of-district tuitions.

Mr. Conry requested approval to transfer \$200k from OPEB Trust to cover the out-of-district tuition and approval of the FY25 CCRSD Second Quarter Budget as presented. A brief discussion was held on the OPEB Trust and Mr. Conry confirmed the OPEB contribution is in the budget as a backup and will not remove anything from the fund.

Ms. Anderson moved, and Ms. Marano seconded the motion to approve the FY25 CCRSD Second Quarter Budget as presented. Roll was taken: Anderson, aye; Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rainey, aye; Rankin, aye; Viola, aye; Waterson, aye.

D. FY26 Budget

1. DEIB
2. METCO

Mr. Conry presented the cost summary for the district's METCO program and underscored the need for a careful examination of transportation costs while ensuring students have safe and reliable access to educational opportunities. Transportation is the largest budget line-item expenditure and there are concerns about the late buses and low ridership on routes. The district is exploring alternatives such as consolidating transportation routes; exploring alternative transportation; and reducing the frequency of certain late buses. Other program costs include the METCO director, administrative support staff, an adjustment counselor, an academic liaison, monitor duty, special education aides, LAB program teacher, calculus project instructional leads, contract services memberships, professional development, enrichment programs, and misc. supplies and materials. The METCO Program Costs for CPS FY25 is \$1,236,530, with \$545,183 costs in excess of grant funding. The METCO Program Costs for CCRSD FY25 is \$501,458, with \$32,352 costs in excess of grant funding.

E. CCRSD FY26 Warrants

1. Amenities Building

The committee discussed the warrant article, and a consensus was reached to request funding for the construction of an amenities building at the athletic complex, to address the critical need for ADA-accessible restroom facilities. While the project will initially request the full estimated cost (approximately \$1.8 million), the committee will explore cost-effective construction methods to potentially reduce the scope and to minimize expenses. One potential funding option discussed was the Concord and Carlisle's Community Preservation Committee (CPCs) and engaging in a public outreach campaign to educate the community about the project. This will involve addressing concerns regarding project costs and potential impacts on taxpayers, while emphasizing the importance of this

essential project for the community.

Ms. Marano motioned, and Ms. Anderson seconded the motion to put the warrant on the ballot for \$1.8 million dollars. Roll was taken: Anderson, aye; Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rainey, aye; Rankin, aye; Viola, aye; Waterson, aye.

F. 2025-2026 Calendar First Draft

Dr. Hunter presented the first draft of the 2025-2026 Calendar and focused on key dates, including start and end dates, conference days, and the professional development days. Some other proposed calendar changes include an early start date on August 27th, with Labor Day falling very early in the year; a joint conference date in November for both elementary and middle schools; and a long December break, with students returning to school on January 5th.

G. First Reading Graduation Policy IKF

Dr. Hunter presented the sates proposed revisions to graduation requirements. In lieu of MCAS, a new "competency determination" will be implemented that requires students to complete specific core subject courses. Students will be required to pass two full-year courses of English; two Math options chosen from Blended Algebra/Geometry, Geometry, or Algebra II; and one Science option chosen from Earth Science, Biology/Physics, or Chemistry. The current 8.75 credits for Health and Physical Education (P.E.) will be adjusted in the junior-year, reducing student's schedule to one semester with two days of instruction per week. The new competency determination requirements will be phased in gradually, with the Class of 2027 being the first class impacted.

H. School Committee Goals

Ms. Viola led a discussion on the School Committee Goals updates including an upcoming "Coffee with the Community" event scheduled for January 27th; Ms. Anderson and Ms. Lawton are collaborating on outreach efforts in Boston; the deadline for feedback on the "Story of the School" is March; and the Policy Subcommittee will meet in March to review the cell phone and Title IX policies.

V. SUPERINTENDENT, CHAIRS AND LIAISONS UPDATE

Dr. Hunter provided the Superintendent Update emphasizing the start of the second half of the school year and its implications, including the commencement of high school sign-ups and the efforts to address staffing needs and enrollment projections in preparation for the upcoming budget cycle. The district also has several key leadership positions currently being filled, including the Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning and both the CPS and high school METCO Directors. Some highlights noted, Dr. Hunter recently attended the Calculus Project and a positive METCO parent meeting; Concord Middle School has scheduled an open house.

Ms. Rankin provided updates including Dr. Hunter and Mr. Conry will be presenting budget information to the Finance Committee on February 13th; the Capital Planning Committee has approved six of the seven submitted projects, including \$441,000 for Thoreau School's

new campus project; the Town Meeting Committee is finalizing recommendations, including the use of electronic devices; and the Recreation Committee is moving forward with plans to install artificial turf at Doug White Field.

Ms. Viola provided updates including a coffee with the community is being held at the Rock Center in Boston on February 26th; a coffee with the community will be scheduled at Carlisle in April or May; and the Concord Capital Public Hearing focused on the amenities building, prompting a discussion on funding strategies.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE

CPS received an inquiry from Wellesley inquiring about whether our buildings have air conditioning. CCRSD received a question on Title IX and received positive feedback on the Amenities Building.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Warrants

1. CPS A/P

1066	1/3/25	\$294,046.06
1070	1/16/25	\$43.15
1071	1/16/25	\$317,787.80
1072	1/16/25	\$43,165.27
1073	1/16/25	\$54,089.21

2. CCRSD A/P

1161	1/3/25	\$79,471.31
1162	12/12/24	\$161.48
1163	12/12/24	\$270,625.00
1164	1/3/25	\$275.00
1165	12/13/24	\$137,962.38
1173	1/16/25	\$424,821.77

3. CPS Payroll

Pay date	1/16/25	\$346,265.94
Pay date	1/16/25	\$1,472.39
Pay date	1/16/25	\$219,683.08

4. CCRSD

Payroll Pay Date	1/16/25	\$630,005.28
Pay date	1/16/25	\$76,071.00
Pay date	1/16/25	\$43,728.29
Pay date	1/16/25	\$159,467.92
Pay date	1/16/25	\$952.80

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

VIII. ADJOURNMENT CCSC

Ms. Waterson moved, and Ms. Anderson seconded the motion to adjourn the CCRSD 9:05 PM.

IX. DISCUSSION

A. CMS Updates

Juston Cameron, principal of the Middle School, is developing a consolidation project emphasizing "Unification and Unity" with a merged logo and a "Walk, Roll, Run" event from Sanborn to Peabody on Thursday, February 13th at 3 PM, which will also raise funds for for the DC trip. The construction is near completion, with kitchen equipment installed, internet connectivity established, and the building had the water leakage test. The auditorium will be offline for approximately a month and the sign isn't ready, but a banner will be displayed at the street. A few ongoing challenges were noted including a temporary septic system, potential student emotional challenges, and the logistical complexities of merging two schools.

B. CMLP CMS Solar Agreement

The CMS solar agreement is currently under review by legal counsel. The agreement must address access to equipment, including potential battery storage, while specific details like parking canopy locations remain under discussion. The primary goal is to share the building and space, not to seek financial gain from the solar project. The committee will review the agreement in detail at the March 11th meeting, as the solar company is eager to proceed with bidding and requires a timely agreement.

C. Surplus CMS Furniture and Materials

The inventory surplus of CMS Furniture and Materials was presented to the committee. The district will donate, repurpose, or recycle inventory items and allow the community access to view and remove any items.

Ms. Anderson moved, and Mr. Herchek seconded to approve the disposal of the Surplus CMS Furniture and Materials as presented in the attachment to the agenda. Roll was taken: Anderson, aye; Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rainey, aye; Rankin, aye.

D. CPS FY25 Second Quarter Budget Update

Mr. Conry presented the update on the FY25 budget for CPS. The current budget is \$46,592,022. Some items noted were a \$165K decrease in professional salaries; a \$52K decrease in supplies and materials; an increase of \$66K in property and liability insurance; a \$51K increase in waste and recycling services; and the homeless transportation costs of \$155k. Mr. Conry is asking the committee to approve the budget transfers as presented.

Ms. Marano moved, and Mr. Herchek seconded the motion to approve the CPS FY25 Second Quarter Budget Update as presented. Roll was taken: Anderson, aye; Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rainey, aye; Rankin, aye.

X. Adjournment CPS

Ms. Anderson moved, and Mr. Herchek seconded the motion to adjourn the CPS at 9:25 PM.

Barbara Gilmore

Approved: February 4, 2025