

**JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES Concord-Carlisle School Committee
Concord School Committee
February 4, 2025**

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

Not Present: Carrie Rankin, Chair 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

Mr. Herchek called the Concord School Committee (CSC) to order at 6:00 PM.

II. CPS FY26 BUDGET HEARING

Mr. Conry gave the FY26 budget presentation for Concord Public Schools. He noted several key adjustments including professional staff salaries and supplies/materials decreased due to savings from hiring and leave of absences; homeless and special education transportation costs drove budget transfers; and increased waste/recycling service costs and property/liability insurance premiums were major drivers of expenditure increases. Conversely, lower bus lease costs due to delivery delays resulted in budget savings. Additional funds were transferred to cover out-of-district tuition deficits, utilizing circuit breaker reserves.

The proposed CPS FY26 budget reflects a 2.4% increase, aligning with town guidelines, while aiming to maintain existing programs, support strategic initiatives, and meet legal mandates. The budget incorporates \$576,000 in savings from the middle school consolidation, offsetting increases in areas like teacher salaries, administration, and fixed charges. Per-pupil expenditure is benchmarked fifth among peer districts, with Lincoln Sudbury surpassing Concord; and special education and homeless student support, including transportation, remain key considerations, with potential budget impacts from anticipated shelter closures.

III. DISCUSSION

A. CMLP Agreement Update

Mr. Conry updated the committee on the ongoing development of an intergovernmental agreement with the Concord Municipal Light Plant (CMLP). He indicated productive

discussions with CMLP General Manager Jason Bulger and expressed confidence in finalizing the agreement, though some wording still requires attention. The agreement will encompass the complete solar project, including rooftop panels, canopies, and battery storage.

IV. ACTION ITEMS

A. Vote to Surplus Peabody

The School Committee considered a motion to declare the Peabody School property as surplus. A brief discussion was held concerning the possible options for retaining and monetizing the surplus property for educational purposes. Mr. Conry indicated that legal counsel suggested this might not be feasible or have community support, therefore he recommended moving forward with the surplus declaration as written.

Ms. Anderson moved and Ms. Rainey seconded the motion that the School Committee declare that the three parcels of land known collectively as the “Peabody School Property” and comprised of 1231 Old Marlboro Road (Parcel ID 3000), 78 Old Pickard Road (Parcel ID 2999), and 68B Powder Mill Road (Parcel ID 2991-7), are no longer necessary for public school purposes and recommends the transfer of care, custody, management, and control of said parcels to the Select Board. Roll was taken: Anderson, aye; Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rainey, aye.

B. Vote Warrant to Create Facility Use Revolving Account

Ms. Anderson moved, and Ms. Marano seconded the motion that the Concord School Committee vote to authorize establishment of a Facilities Rental Revolving Fund, in accordance with Massachusetts General laws, Chapter 71, Section 71E and/or any other enabling legislation, and to further approve the draft warrant language presented for Town meeting approval. Roll was taken: Anderson, aye; Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rainey, nay.

C. Vote Warrant to Create Non-Resident Tuition Revolving Account

Ms. Rainey moved, and Mr. Herchek seconded the motion that the Concord School Committee vote to authorize establishment of a Non-Resident Tuition Revolving Fund, in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 71F and/or any other enabling legislation., and to further approve the draft warrant article language presented for Town meeting approval. Roll was taken: Anderson, aye; Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rainey, aye.

D. Vote Warrant Regarding Extended Procurement of Leases and Subscriptions

Ms. Anderson moved and Ms. Rainey seconded the motion that the Concord School Committees vote to approve the submission of a Town Meeting warrant article to authorize extended contract terms of up to five years for bus leases and curriculum licenses and subscriptions, in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30B, Section 12B and/or any other enabling legislation, and to further approve the draft warrant article language presented on the following page for Town meeting approval. Roll was taken: Anderson, aye; Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rainey, aye.

E. Vote CPS FY26 Budget

Ms. Anderson moved and Ms. Marano seconded the motion that that the Concord School Committee vote to approve the Concord Public Schools proposed FY26 Budget of \$47,632,034 and further that an additional sum of \$69,906 be requested as supplemental funding from the Town of Concord for the specific amount anticipated to be received by the Town in June 2025, on behalf of Concord Public Schools, through the McKinney-Vento Homeless Transportation program, for the purpose of reimbursing additional transportation expenses arising from students residing at the homeless shelter at 740 Elm St, Concord, MA, said sum requiring further municipal appropriation by Town Meeting. Roll was taken: Anderson, aye; Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rainey, aye.

V. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ms. Anderson moved, and Ms. Rainey seconded the motion to enter Executive Session at 6:42 p.m. under Purpose 3 of the Open Meeting Law which is to conduct strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Concord Public Schools building service workers and to return to open session.

VI. CALL TO ORDER - CONCORD-CARLISLE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Ms. Viola called the Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committee (CCRSD) to order at 6:57 PM. Roll call was taken: Anderson, aye; Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rainey, aye; Viola, aye; Waterson, aye.

VII. CCRSD FY 26 BUDGET HEARING

Mr. Conry presented the Concord-Carlisle Regional School District's FY26 budget, reflecting a 4.08%, increase in alignment with the towns of Concord and Carlisle guidelines. The total assessment is calculated by subtracting all non-taxpayer-funded revenues from the budget. The overall assessment increase of 4.08%, has a 4.37% increase for Concord and a 3.15% increase for Carlisle, due to enrollment shifts. The Finance Committee guidelines are exclusive of debt; for FY26, the Finance Committee established a 3.48% guideline for CCRSD that had a one-time exclusion of the impact of out of district tuition increases.

Key drivers of the budget include special education transportation, athletics, and out-of-district tuitions. While administration and teaching costs saw moderate increases, other areas like maintenance and operations, and out-of-district tuitions experienced significant growth. The budget incorporates adjustments for insurance, technology, and facility needs, with a focus on maintaining existing programs and student supports. Revenue is relatively stable, with potential adjustments to state funding. The district is addressing funding for the amenities building and monitoring potential risks related to federal funding and special education transportation reimbursement. The Excess and Deficiency fund is strategically managed as a safety net and to maintain a strong bond rating and is 4.7% of the operating budget with a 5% cap.

Mr. Waterson moved, and Ms. Rainey seconded the motion to request the Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committees vote to approve the CCRSD proposed FY26 Budget in the amount of \$40,479,952. Roll was taken: Anderson, aye; Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rainey, aye; Viola, aye; Waterson, aye.

VIII. RECOGNITION – CHRIS NOCE

Concord-Carlisle High School Director of Bands and Orchestras Christopher Noce highlighted the music department's upcoming events, which include: a joint concert with Lexington High School on March 4th, featuring commissioned works that commemorate Concord's revolutionary history; a performance by the CCHS Concert Band at the NAFME Eastern Division Conference in April, featuring a guest accordionist from Mexico City; a planned trip to Japan in 2026; and participation in local Patriots Day events.

IX. CCHS STUDENT UPDATE

CCHS student representatives Zariah Alves, Maddie Clancy, and Felicity Zhang presented the School Committee with an update on recent events and activities at the high school. Students participated in an educational assembly about the swastika; in celebration of Black History Month, faculty members displayed quotes from influential Black figures on their doors; juniors are meeting with guidance counselors to review next year's course selections now that the registration portal is open; and students are contributing to a DEIB film project that promotes belonging and encourages the sharing of personal stories.

High school achievement celebrations included the girls' swim and dive team winning the DCL Championship for the second consecutive year; fine arts students received recognition for their work in the Scholastic Art Awards, including a Gold Key award for Roman Lin's "Erupting Jars"; and performing arts students were accepted to the MMEA All-State Festival in March.

Upcoming events at the high school include auditions for "Shrek the Musical"; a Lunar New Year Festival hosted by the Far East Association in collaboration with elementary school groups; a Valentine's Day carnation fundraiser for school events; and students and staff are looking forward to the winter break, which begins on February 15th.

X. PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Wendy Holt, 30 Dover Street, Concord, MA, addressed DEIB and the METCO program. While praising the school's DEIB initiatives, Ms. Holt expressed concern about the level of input from the METCO PTG and its high school delegate. She emphasized the "Nothing About Us Without Us" principle, stressing the importance of incorporating the life experiences of the METCO community. To address potential impasses, she recommended an external review by DEIB experts, ideally people of color, to analyze relevant documents and meeting recordings. This review could provide insights into role structuring, meeting dynamics, and potential microaggressions.

XI. CORRESPONDENCE

CPS had no correspondence.

CCRSD was copied on correspondence to the high school principal.

XII. SUPERINTENDENT, CHAIRS AND LIAISONS UPDATE

Dr. Hunter toured the new Concord Middle School (CMS) building and occupancy is only

eight school days away. Since the middle school transition is nearing completion, the district has addressed parent logistics in recent Zoom meetings. High school course selection is underway, with successful curriculum nights held for incoming ninth-grade parents. The district is also launching a series of multicultural nights, starting at Alcott School and an AI committee is being formed to explore the educational implications of artificial intelligence, with the goal of creating a draft policy by the end of the school year.

Ms. Viola updated the school committee on regional programming including a presentation on anxiety and an upcoming speaker series on special education. The Carlisle Finance Committee meeting focused on budget considerations due to limited resources and significant time is being dedicated to the CPA and amenities building project to minimize taxpayer impact.

Ms. Anderson reported that CPC declined the district's application. Conversely, the Carlisle CPC expressed a positive outlook on the project and will advance it to the Town Meeting. A primary concern raised by the Carlisle CPC is the inclusion of office space, specifically a trainer's room, may render the project ineligible for CPA funding. The Carlisle CPC has invited the committee to present again in early March.

Mr. Waterson clarified to the committee members that the trainer's room is classified as office space and is therefore ineligible for CPA funding. The district has been invited to present again in March.

Ms. Marano stated the Doug White fields are scheduled for replacement over the summer and the RFP for the cell tower on the landfill received three responses and an award is expected soon.

Mr. Herchek toured CMS and reported the building is rapidly coming to life. Power and heat are operational, and the building is eight days from occupancy.

XIII. DISCUSSION

A. IKF Second Reading (Vote)

The committee had a second reading of Policy IKF, concerning graduation requirements. Ms. Anderson moved, and Mr. Waterson seconded the motion to accept the IKF Second Reading as presented. Roll was taken: Anderson, aye; Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rainey, aye; Viola, aye; Waterson, aye.

XIV. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Final 25-26 Calendar

B. Joint Meeting Minutes 1/7/25

C. Joint Meeting Minutes 1/21/25

D. Warrants

1. CPS A/P

1077	1/30/25	\$235,519.02
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2. CCRSD A/P

	1175	1/22/25	\$750.00
	1176	1/23/25	\$8,500.00
	1181	1/30/25	\$243,145.92
3.	CPS Payroll		
	Pay date	1/30/25	\$172,142.92
	Pay date	1/30/25	\$2,191.86
	Pay date	1/30/25	\$314,761.16
4.	CCRSD Payroll		
	Pay date	1/30/25	\$23,151.76
	Pay date	1/30/25	\$696,389.88
	Pay date	1/30/25	\$75,286.91
	Pay date	1/30/25	\$178,973.22

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

XV. ACTION ITEMS

A. Vote CCRSD FY26 Budget

Ms. Anderson moved, and Mr. Herchek seconded the motion that the Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committees vote to approve the CCRSD proposed FY26 Budget in the amount of \$40,479,952. Roll was taken: Anderson, aye; Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rainey, aye; Viola, aye; Waterson, aye.

B. Vote Amenities Warrant

Ms. Anderson moved and Mr. Waterson seconded the motion that the Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committee vote to appropriate the sum of \$1,850,000 to be expended under the direction of the Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committee, for the purpose of constructing an amenities building with public restrooms and concessions space, including without limitation the costs of engineering, design, site preparation, excavation, subsurface materials, and construction, and all other costs incidental or related thereto at the Concord-Carlisle High School, located at 500 Walden Street, Concord, Massachusetts. Roll was taken: Anderson, aye; Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rainey, aye; Viola, aye; Waterson, aye.

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Anderson moved, and Mr. Herchek seconded the motion to adjourn the Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committee at 8:21 PM. Roll call was taken: Anderson, aye; Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rainey, aye; Viola, aye; Waterson, aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Gilmore

Approved: March 11, 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