

JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

**Concord-Carlisle School Committee
Concord School Committee
April 10, 2025**

Present: Julie Viola, Chair; CCSC
Brian Waterson, CCSC
Carrie Rankin, Chair CSC; CCSC
Andrew Herchek, CSC; CCSC
Tracey Marano, CSC; CCSC
Cynthia Rainey, CSC; CCSC
Ayesha Lawton, CSC METCO Representative - On line
Michelle McDougall, CSC METCO Representative

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

Not Present: Alexa Anderson, Vice Chair CCSC; CSC

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Viola called the Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committee (CCSC) to order at 5:00 PM.
Ms. Rankin called the Concord School Committee (CSC) to order at 5:00 PM.

II. ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING PUBLIC INTERVIEWS

Ms. Viola stated the first part of the meeting would be dedicated to interviewing the two final candidates for the Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning.

Shelly Chin, the current Interim Assistant Superintendent of CPS & CCRSD, was the first candidate interviewed. Ms. Chin discussed her beliefs regarding equity in public education; the value of collaborative leadership; effective teaching method; and the use of analytical data for measurement. Since joining the district, she has created a professional development plan for teachers; and curriculum programs for grades K-12, including the development of a literacy curriculum.

Ms. Chin discussed the challenges faced by students in the areas of mental health and technology. With a strong emphasis on social-emotional well-being, she strives to create an environment where all students feel seen, connected, and supported. She discussed her priorities including the support of educators; seeking a balance between student performance and individual needs; advocating for varied learning pathways; and developing rigorous instruction tailored to diverse learners. Her professional development plan is characterized by teacher input and is data-driven with actionable learning opportunities.

The second candidate interviewed was Anne Auger, Director of Instruction for Everett Public Schools. Ms. Auger shared her belief that talent is equally distributed, but opportunity is not. One of her top priorities in her current position has been identifying students who are not growing or meeting expectations. Her passion is in closing opportunity gaps and fostering both higher expectations and stronger support systems for all students. A key aspect of her current role

involves leveraging the expertise of existing staff to create individualized plans and structures for students. This approach utilizes data in frequent cycles to ensure continuous progress, not only within a single school year but also longitudinally from pre-K through 12th grade, with a clear vision of what students should achieve by graduation.

Ms. Auger shared that her passion for instructional development work stemmed directly from her experience as an ESL teacher. While she misses teaching, she finds great satisfaction in working with and empowering principals, celebrating their successes, and mentoring teacher evaluators. She credited her current success to her collaborative nature, her desire to support principals by providing resources for their success, and her data-driven approach, which can reveal potential missed opportunities for students.

A brief recess was taken. Ms. Viola reconvened the Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committee (CCSC) at 6:00 PM. Ms. Rankin reconvened the Concord School Committee (CSC) 6:00 PM.

III. CCHS STUDENT UPDATE

CCHS student representatives Maddy Clancy and Felicity Zhang shared the fourth quarter has begun, with only 40 school days remaining for underclassmen and juniors, and 27 days until graduation. Seniors are counting down to graduation and preparing for Senior Week events such as the Day of Service, a trip to Kimball's, and a visit to Six Flags. They are excited that CCHS is piloting the elimination of Coordinated Testing Days in the fourth quarter.

Other events and accomplishments highlighted included World Language Week, which featured food and music representing various languages; the Performing Arts Department hosted an exchange group from Montville, New Jersey High School; and they also earned four gold medals at the Massachusetts Instrumental and Choral Conductors Association Festival. Students are looking forward to upcoming events including the Concord 250 celebration; a "Fun Friday" event with music, food, and activities; and the premiere of "Shrek."

IV. RECOGNITIONS - CCHS CARLISLE STUDENTS

Principal Katie Stahl recognized several students from Concord Carlisle High School.

Senior Benjamin Pixley was recognized for his exceptional musical and theatrical talents as an All-Eastern performer; a member of the Tri-M National Music Honor Society; his roles in CCHS musicals; and for his directing work at Carlisle Middle School. Ben will be attending Harvard University in the Fall to study pre-med and music.

Courtney Kalkstein was recognized as an exceptional senior leader in the band and as an All-Eastern percussionist. She has been a featured performer with the CCHS Concert Band and is also an exceptional dancer. Courtney will be attending Bowdoin College in the fall.

Frannie Heh is a junior who qualified for the Massachusetts State Level Science and Engineering Fair for her research on a dual inhibition strategy to disrupt the metabolic backbone driving triple negative breast cancer (TNBC) adaptability and resistance.

Rory Best was recognized for his exceptional musical talent and leadership in his band, "Rory

and the Roarettes,” and for his participation in the CCHS jazz band as a tenor saxophone player.

Sophomore Miles Verge was recognized for his U.S. History Civics project which included a letter sent to Governor Healey on data privacy. The Governor responded, stating data privacy is one of her top priorities and his letter “made her day.”

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

Sarah Wilson presented flowers to Ms. Rainey and Ms. Anderson to express her appreciation to the outgoing school committee members, for their public service, integrity, and commitment.

Betsy Olsson-Mackowski, 1741 Wedgewood Common, Concord MA addressed the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail connector. She believes an ADA-accessible connector is a great goal, but requested the school committee consider other solutions to address potential erosion issues and create a nature or walking path, rather than resorting to heavy equipment and paving.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Spanish Book Donations to CCHS Library
- B. Community Member Printer Donation to CCHS
- C. CCHS Staff Children Enrollment Request for CMS
- D. Joint Meeting Minutes March 25, 2025
- E. Warrant Articles

1. CPS A/P		
1102	3/27/25	\$156,104.35
1104	3/27/25	\$6,399.31
1108	4/10/25	\$47.09
1109	4/10/25	\$205,672.43
1115	4/10/25	\$67.26
2. CCRSD A/P		
1218	3/21/25	\$711.49
1227	3/27/25	\$265,631.05
1229	4/7/25	\$75.00
3. CPS Payroll		
Pay date	3/27/25	\$225,981.08
Pay date	3/27/25	\$2,164.68
Pay date	3/27/25	\$370,525.34
4. CCRSD Payroll		
Pay date	3/27/25	\$15,742.96
Pay date	3/27/25	\$618,201.26
Pay date	3/27/25	\$76,190.12
Pay date	3/27/25	\$178,088.85
Pay date	3/27/25	\$44,824.23

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

VII. CORRESPONDENCE

CPS received two emails on the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, and one email about political endorsements.

CCHS had no correspondence.

VIII. SUPERINTENDENT, CHAIRS, AND LIAISONS UPDATE

Dr. Hunter presented the Superintendent Updates on several initiatives including the K-5 literacy committee is nearing the selection of an evidence-based comprehension program; the AI committee met with a Harvard cognitive scientist and its goal is to have a draft policy by June; budget funds have been reallocated to create full-time special education administrator positions in each K-5 school; and the district is significantly involved in the Concord 250th celebration, providing logistical support and educational opportunities for students, including participation in events with Ken Burns.

Dr. Hunter reported on the planning for the 2025-2026 school year, which included staffing and enrollment-driven budget adjustments, as well as high school scheduling. A key focus is addressing staff morale issues related to student needs, workload, budget limitations, and overall climate. Strategies for this include administrative classroom visits; staff meeting attendance; prioritizing staff well-being; and acknowledging the pressures of the current educational environment. Despite low volunteer turnout for a wellness task force, she is utilizing other methods to gather feedback, emphasizing the staff's dedication and the positive, actionable results stemming from these feedback efforts.

Ms. Rankin acknowledged the recent passing of Ruth Lauer, a long-time Concord resident who served on both the school committee and the select board. She reminded the committee that the deadline for the school committee evaluations is tomorrow, and she announced the ribbon-cutting ceremony and open house for the middle school will take place on May 3rd.

Ms. Viola updated the committee on several topics, including the ongoing effort regarding CCHS tutors and recent productive CPAC meetings. She highlighted the need for consistent communication about committee decisions, particularly concerning literacy initiatives, and the importance of establishing a school cell phone policy through a collaborative approach with parents. Ms. Viola reminded the committee of the importance of elected officials informing the public about their backgrounds, especially considering community feedback and discussions on topics like AI and diversity. She also emphasized the need for improved community collaboration among Concord, Carlisle, and Boston, concerning events.

Mr. Herchek provided a quick update on the middle school project. An unexpected discovery of additional asbestos requiring remediation necessitated a change order of over \$400,000 to address the asbestos, which will be covered by the project's contingency funds. The remediation work is expected to delay the project schedule one to two weeks.

IX. DISCUSSION

Dr. Hunter reminded the committee about the school trip approval process and policy. All trips require pre-approval before advertising to students and are then brought back for a second approval in the fall.

A. CCHS Trips 25-26

Mr. Waterson moved, and Mr. Herchek seconded the motion to accept the CCHS Trips 25-26 to Denmark, Dominican Republic, England and France, Japan Performance Tour, Quebec Trip, and White Mountains NH as presented. Roll was taken: Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rankin, aye; Viola, aye; Waterson, aye.

B. CPS Trips 25-26

Ms. Marano moved, and Mr. Herchek seconded the motion to accept the CPS Trips 25-26 to Disney World as presented. Roll was taken: Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rankin, aye; Viola, aye; Waterson, aye.

C. FY25 Quarterly Transfers

Mr. Conry presented the Quarterly Transfers for approval, as of April 2, 2025. Some items noted were a \$131,000 decrease in instructional supplies and materials; homeless transportation accounted for \$203,000 of the budget transfers; and an increase in property and liability insurance accounted for nearly all the \$66,000 increase. The budget is under due to delays of the arrival of ordered school buses, resulting in lower lease costs.

Ms. Marano moved, and Mr. Herchek seconded the motion to accept the FY25 CPS Quarterly Transfers as presented. Roll was taken: Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rankin, aye; Viola, aye; Waterson, aye.

Mr. Conry presented the Quarterly Transfers for the FY 25 CCRSD. The transfer adjustments include \$68,000 in savings from the CCHS Tech Specialist retirement; salary savings on replacement hires; and SPED and homeless transportation costs. Fixed charges are favorable due to the transfer of OPEB budgeted contributions to OOD tuition, offsetting tuition overages, and a circuit-breaker and grant offset that will be applied later in the year.

Mr. Waterson moved, and Ms. Rankin seconded the motion to accept the FY25 CCRSD Quarterly Transfers as presented. Roll was taken: Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rankin, aye; Viola, aye; Waterson, aye.

D. FY25 Anticipated E and D Balance

CCRSD's free cash is reviewed by the Division of Local Services within the Massachusetts Department of Revenue to certify the CCRSD E&D balance as of June 30, 2024. The certified amount as of June 30, 2024, was \$1,628,226, which represents 4.2% of the FY2025 Budget, slightly below the statutory cap of 5.0%. Mr. Conry proposed taking \$200k for the OPEB contribution, and \$200k for the Capital Stabilization account.

Ms. Marano moved, and Mr. Herchek seconded the motion to approve the use of \$400,000 in E&D funds to increase the FY25 CCRSD Budget and utilize the funds for the purposes outlined in this memo. Roll was taken: Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rankin, aye; Viola, aye; Waterson, aye.

E. FY26 CCRSD Budget (Vote)

The E&D was recently certified, as separately reported on tonight's agenda. Due to a technical requirement in the budget process, the CCRSD School Committee must revote the

budget, as required when E&D is certified after budgets have been approved. The Proposed FY26 budget of \$40,384,952 is an increase of 3.62% above the FY25 Adopted Budget.

Mr. Herchek moved, and Mr. Waterson seconded the motion to approve the Concord-Carlisle Regional School District Proposed FY26 Budget in the amount presented above, and the resultant assessments allocated to the Town of Concord and Town of Carlisle per the regional agreement formula. Roll was taken: Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rankin, aye; Viola, aye; Waterson, aye.

F. Amenities Building Warrant

Mr. Waterson presented the FAQ, design slides, and outreach letter for the Amenities Building, noting that Gayle Associates completed 75% of the design for the CCHS Amenities Building. The design will be presented at the town meeting, when the budget and financing will be discussed. The Amenities Building is a 1,700 square foot block structure with accessible facilities for visitors at the CCHS lower fields, including ADA-compliant bathrooms and recreation storage. Mr. Waterson also noted that he and Ms. Viola will be hosting a podcast with the Town Administrator on the Amenities Building.

Ms. Marano moved, and Ms. Herchek seconded the motion to accept the Amenities Building FAQ, Design Warrant Slides, and the Outreach Letter as presented. Roll was taken: Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rankin, aye; Viola, aye; Waterson, aye.

G. Cell Phone Policy Update and Discussion

The CCRSD and CPS cell phone policy subcommittee has suggested developing distinct policies for the two districts due to their different needs. Key discussion points included managing medical devices reliant on cell phone technology; off campus activities and communication; and the potential liability and cost for an "away for the day" policy. The subcommittee is creating a project plan with public forums in May. Updating the regional policy is a longer-term process requiring input from teachers and students, but a K-8 policy is considered simpler, possibly involving stricter enforcement of the "bell to bell" rule. The committee recognized the possibility of future state guidelines on cell phone policies.

H. Title IX Policies

The committee discussed updating Title IX policies due to a federal administrative change that reverted regulations to those of the previous administration. The district is legally bound to follow the current regulations regardless of existing policy language. These changes concern the definition of sexual harassment and procedural rights for the accused.

Ms. Marano moved, and Herchek seconded the motion to approve the Title IX Policies AC and ACR as presented. Roll was taken, Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rankin, aye; Viola, aye; Waterson, aye.

X. ACTION ITEMS

A. Vote Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations Contract 2025-2028

Ms. Marano moved, and Mr. Herchek seconded the motion to approve the Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations Contract for 2025-2028 as presented. Roll call was taken: Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rankin, aye; Viola, aye; Waterson, aye.

B. Vote to Hire Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning
Ms. Marano moved, and Ms. Rankin seconded the motion to offer Shelly Chin the Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning position. Roll was taken: Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Rankin, aye; Viola, aye; Waterson, aye.

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ms. Marano moved, and Mr. Waterson seconded the motion for The Concord-Carlisle School Committee to enter Executive Session under Purpose 3 of the Open Meeting Law: To conduct strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the CCHS Teachers and not return to Open Session.

Executive Session was entered at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Gilmore

Approved: May 13, 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