

Present: Andrew Herchek, Chair CSC; CCSC
Tracey Marano, Chair CCSC
Sandeep Pisharody, CSC; CCSC via Zoom
Carrie Rankin, Vice-Chair CSC; CCSC
Michael Williams, CSC; CCSC
Ayesha Lawton, CSC METCO Representative on Zoom

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 to order at 6:00 PM. Roll was taken: Herchek, present; Marano, present; Pisharody, present; Rankin, present; and Williams, present.

II. RECOGNITIONS - CMS Student-Led Conferences

CMS students and parents shared feedback on the new student-led conference model. Under this system, students spend months building portfolios and analyzing their progress before leading a 30-minute conference with their advisor and parents. This student-centric approach was praised for several reasons: it builds confidence and self-reflection skills in students; it provides parents meaningful insights directly from their children; and it allows teachers to shift from rushed 7-minute meetings to deeper, 30-minute connections. Students describe the new dynamic as a powerful tool that encourages ownership of their educational journey.

III. SUPERINTENDENT AND CHAIR UPDATE

Dr. Hunter provided several updates on community and school initiatives focusing on engagement, diversity, and civics including the launch of a community reading opportunity at the elementary schools; CCHS hosted an intimate DEIB panel, including members of the Jewish and LGBTQ communities; Facing History staff antisemitism training continues and the district will hold a series of events for the community on LGBTQ and general bias/hate issues; and the eighth-grade Civics Showcase was an inspirational community event, where students chose a problem or issue and then presented research projects proposing solutions.

Mr. Williams and Ms. Lawton expressed frustration with the response to the hate graffiti discovered after a recent DEIB event. Ms. Lawton questioned why a formal statement condemning acts of hate and outlining the potential consequences was not issued. Dr. Hunter explained the details must remain confidential due to the active investigation and Massachusetts laws protecting the identity of minors. Mr. Williams clarified that process questions regarding the incident could be answered in a manner that preserves the confidentiality of all parties.

Mr. Herchek provided two brief updates regarding committee support. First, while the committee fully supports the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail connection, it will not lead the fundraising or organizational efforts. Second, the committee supports the CMLP solar project at the middle school, noting that it will remain a CMLP-led initiative.

Ms. Marano shared the water and sewer appeal for the amenities building sewer connection will be on the town's agenda on December 10th. CPC is supportive of this step and will continue the review of the amenities building after the December 10th hearing .

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Kate McEneaney, 58 Walnut Street, Concord, presented "Brighter Together," an upcoming community art project centered on handmade lanterns. In collaboration with Art For All, the initiative aims to counteract societal divisiveness by creating a unifying event where community members participate in lantern-making workshops. The project will culminate in a lantern parade in March, ending at the Concord Scout House with hot chocolate, music, poetry, and art. The project has secured funding through the 250th Executive Committee and has ten workshops planned. Ms. McEneaney plans to provide kits and volunteer opportunities to afterschool clubs and the high school art club, welcoming voluntary school involvement.

Gail Hire, 54 Nancy Road Concord advocated for the implementation of a "bell-to-bell" no-cell-phone policy. She feels that phones should be physically inaccessible rather than simply turned off. Ms. Hire cited research from a University of Pennsylvania professor who found that banning devices left students less distracted, more engaged, and more satisfied with their learning. She also referenced a study from Spokane, Washington, where banning phones resulted in a jump in extracurricular participation from 24% to nearly 80%. She concluded these measures demonstrate how restricting phones can enhance connection to the school community and improve learning.

Connie Levine, 149 Stow Street, Concord offered recommendations to improve transparency and public confidence regarding civil rights issues. Ms. Levine suggested the committee adopt and publicize a comprehensive non-discrimination policy modeled after Boston Public Schools. She noted that such a policy should list protected classes and outline clear disciplinary measures, including expulsion for students or dismissal for staff. Ms. Levine stated that a formal policy, combined with regular data reporting on would satisfy the community's demand for accountability and demonstrate the district is actively enforcing its commitment to safety.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Warrants

Ms. Marano moved, and Mr. Williams seconded the motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Roll was taken: Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Pisharody, aye; Rankin, aye; and Williams, aye.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE

Ms. Marano shared the district received an email with follow-up on some questions.

VII. DISCUSSION

A. CPS Data Presentation

Ms. Chin presented a review of K-8 academic progress using MCAS and internal data, highlighting that CMS has returned to pre-pandemic achievement levels and ranks in the top 10 statewide for Science, Math, and ELA. Despite this success, the discussion centered on persistent achievement gaps among historically marginalized subgroups. To address this, Ms. Chin outlined three focus areas: implementing equity plans that utilize assessments and "Open Architect" data to inform instruction, specifically targeting gaps for black students in STEM;

continuing curriculum refinements through EL Education and UDL practices to provide necessary scaffolds; and enhancing wellness and self-advocacy through Responsive Classroom, Open Circle, and DEIB committees.

B. CPS FY27 Capital Plan

Mr. Conry presented the CPS FY27 Capital Plan, outlining the request of approximately \$500,000. This figure is lower than the historical average, reflecting the town's directive for fiscal restraint. Key priority projects across the elementary schools include catch basin repairs, the replacement of essential Building Management Systems and an aging glycol mixing tank, updates to obsolete auditorium sound systems, and exterior masonry repairs. The plan also accounts for the replacement of aging equipment, including a floor scrubber, a rusting sand/salt spreader, and two copiers. Mr. Conry highlighted a long-term technology initiative to transition all classroom projectors to touch-screen technology over a two-year cycle. Capital investment in the Ripley building is currently limited to emergency repairs; this decision aligns with ongoing town-level discussions regarding potential consolidation, as the building is at its "end of life." Finally, the district will defer major, high-cost items such as roof replacements and large-scale paving, in hopes of securing future MSBA state subsidies.

C. CPS FY26 First Quarter Transfers

Mr. Conry provided an update on the current budget status, noting the inclusion of an additional \$69,000 in McKinney-Vento Homeless Transportation Reimbursement. The district expects some favorability from lower-than-budgeted middle school electricity costs and custodian vacancy savings; however, these amounts will be offset by recent hiring needs, including filling a custodian position and two special education administrators. Compared to previous years, the district is in a healthy financial position and will continue to seek savings opportunities without hindering administrators from executing their planned programs.

Mr. Williams moved, and Ms. Marano seconded the motion to approve the CPS FY26 First Quarter Transfers as presented. Roll was taken: Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Pisharody, aye; Rankin, aye; and Williams, aye.

D. CIPS Ripley Mural

Dr. Hunter presented a proposal from the CIP PTG and teaching staff, to install murals at the Ripley building, incorporating student-centered artwork. The project is fully supported by the PTG and requires no financial commitment from the district. However, due to the building's unique structure, it needs formal approval before planning can proceed. This mural initiative celebrates the creativity of the preschool community, whose work with vulnerable learners is an incredible asset despite the age of the facility.

Ms. Marano moved, and Mr. Williams seconded the motion to approve that the Concord Integrated Preschool PTG move forward with securing an artist and finalizing the installation at the Ripley Building. Roll was taken: Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Pisharody, aye; Rankin, aye; and Williams, aye.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Marano moved, and Mr. Williams seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. Roll was taken: Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Pisharody, aye; Rankin, aye; and Williams, aye.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Gilmore

Approved January 7, 2026

Abbreviations:

CCHS Concord-Carlisle High School
CCRSB Concord-Carlisle Regional School District
CCSC Concord-Carlisle Regional District School Committee
CCTA Concord-Carlisle Teachers' Association
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