

JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

**Concord-Carlisle School Committee
Concord School Committee
January 7, 2026**

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

Not Present: Brian Waterson, Vice-Chair 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

Mr. Herchek called the Concord School Committee to order at 5:31 PM. Roll Call was taken: Herchek, present; Marano, present; Pisharody, present; Rankin, present; and Williams, present.

II. CPS FY27 BUDGET HEARING

Mr. Conry opened the CPS FY27 budget hearing that proposed a total appropriation of \$48,941,915, a 2.75% increase over the CPS FY26 adopted budget. Teaching & Instructional Support had the largest increase up 3.1% due to 3% COLA, step/lane increases, and the addition of two special education administrators. Other increased expenses included school services, maintenance, fixed charges, community services, and fixed assets. Out-of-district tuition fell \$296,227, or 291.1%, due to declining OOD enrollment.

Ms. Marano moved and Mr. Williams seconded the motion to approve the FY27 Superintendent's Recommended Budget for CPS FY27 as presented. Roll was taken: Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Pisharody, aye; Rankin, aye; and Williams, aye.

Dr. Hunter discussed the creation a Special Education Stabilization Fund to allow the district to set aside up to 2% of annual net school spending to cover unanticipated future costs for OOD tuition and transportation.

Mr. Herchek closed the CPS budget hearing at 5:55 PM.

III. DISCUSSION

Mr. Conry presented the CPS FY 27 Capital Plan and outlined a five-year strategy for facility maintenance and infrastructure improvements. Facility projects identified included Alcott Elementary's driveway repairs, walkway repairs, flat roof replacement, and HVAC system upgrades; Willard Elementary's lighting controls and flooring; and the Ripley Building asphalt walkway, and exterior building repairs. Maintenance and transportation items identified included the replacement of utility body trucks and transportation vehicles; replacement of obsolete pneumatic lifts and lighting controls; and BMS with energy-efficient technology.

Ms. Rankin moved and Mr. Pisharody seconded the motion to approve the CPS FY 27 Capital Plan as presented. Roll was taken: Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Pisharody, aye; Rankin, aye; and Williams, aye.

IV. RECOGNITIONS

A. CCHS Rivers and Twice-Told Tales

Ashley Cohane, Agatha Walham, and students Lucy Frank, Phoebe Lewis, and Omar Nunez shared their experience with CCHS Rivers and Revolutions which focuses on experiential learning and the whole person. Students explored historical sites and created hand-drawn maps that required mathematical proportions and creative writing. Journaling is a pillar of the program and serves as a personal record of academic and emotional growth, fosters deep connections, removes electronic distractions, and builds confidence to take intellectual risks.

Twice-Told Tales allows students to connect with characters by exploring the human condition and weaving together literature, history, and psychology. The course is co-taught by English and Social Studies teachers and students study classic texts through the lens of Freudian defense mechanisms and historical context. The course helps build empathy and self-awareness, teaching students to understand the "why" behind human behavior and the interconnectedness of the humanities and sciences. Both programs synthesize traditionally separate subjects to show how they apply in the real world.

V. CCHS STUDENT UPDATE

Maddie Clancy, Mark Johnson, and Evelyn Mudge shared highlights from the winter sports season, including the diving team which celebrated a meet victory. The students noted the vibrant atmosphere on campus created by the Student Senate's club window decorating project and the Prism performing arts showcase. Students look forward to flex talk with Derek Robbins, cheering on the ski and basketball teams, and bracing for next week's midterms. They highlighted the advocacy work of the Regional Advisory Council and DESE, focusing on bullying and harassment data. The Black Student Union regional potluck is on January 15th, and its goal is to strengthen ties between schools through shared food and culture.

VI. CCRSD FY27 BUDGET HEARING

Mr. Conry presented the CCRSD FY27 Superintendent Recommended Budget that proposed a total budget of \$41,043,946, a 1.63% increase over the FY26 adopted budget. Primary budget drivers included increases in medical insurance; administration costs, including replacement of a Tech Specialist; and a communications firm contract. Decreases noted included OOD Tuitions and Debt Service from the payoff of the landfill remediation loan. The budget also reflects a reduction from 225.0 to 220.86 FTEs, and a 3% COLA increase for teachers and staff.

Ms. Rankin moved and Mr. Herchek seconded the motion to approve the CCRSD FY27 Superintendent's Recommended Budget as presented. Roll was taken: Herchek, aye; Kelleher, aye; Marano, aye; Pisharody, aye; Rankin, aye; and Williams, aye.

VII. SUPERINTENDENTS, CHAIRS, AND METCO UPDATE

Dr. Hunter shared several initiatives starting with the expansion of the Vision of a Graduate to include Pre-K through Grade 8 across Concord and Carlisle. The district is pursuing sustainability grants to offset high infrastructure costs, including grants to electrify an elementary school and for electric vehicle charging stations at CCHS. Dr. Hunter stated a multi-year effort resulted in the hiring of a town-funded community clinician through the Eliot Center, providing students and families with counseling services at no direct cost. Dr. Hunter

concluded with a community invitation to an interactive session on January 27th at the CCHS library, in partnership with Facing History and Ourselves.

Ms. Marano shared she is hosting a Chair's Roundtable with twenty chairs from local communities to discuss shared challenges; the Land Use and Consolidation Committee is discussing the future of the Ripley building and will present a formal recommendation to the Select Board; and a formal discussion on cell phone policy has been postponed until the February regional meeting.

Mr. Herchek encouraged committee members to use the MASC database to research cell phone policies in other districts. Mr. Herchek announced the School Committee approved a modest change order to install permanent Minuteman Media infrastructure at the Ellen Garrison building. The facility will serve as a Concord meeting room and for use by district and community groups. The committee is targeting late February for the first meeting with the new equipment, allowing time for installation and technical testing.

Ms. Lawton and Ms. MacDougall are hosting a meeting at the Mattapan Library to gather feedback from METCO families, and they are participating in a Family Connections meeting alongside the METCO Director to strengthen ties with the parent community. Ms. Marano added, the school committee is moving their Boston-based regional meeting to March or April to avoid potential winter weather disruptions.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Wilson Kerr shared support for restricting electronic device access and praised Middle School Principal Justin Cameron's decision to disable school-provided laptops over winter break. Mr. Kerr noted a behavioral shift in his 12-year-old daughter, who, in the absence of digital distractions, spent every night of the vacation reading and engaging with her family. Mr. Kerr emphasized this experience illustrated how removing screens can transform a child's free time and social interactions. Mr. Kerr urged the committee to consider these tangible benefits as they deliberate on upcoming cell phone policies.

IX. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Joint Meeting Minutes December 8, 2025
- b. Warrants
- c. CCHS DECA State Competition
- d. \$500 Garden Club of Concord Grant for Thoreau
- e. \$75 Donation from Fidelity Charitable for CCHS

Ms. Rankin moved and Mr. Williams second the motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Roll was taken: Herchek, aye; Kelleher, aye; Marano, aye; Pisharody, aye; Rankin, aye; and Williams, aye.

X. CORRESPONDENCE

Ms. Marano reported that five pieces of correspondence were received including inquiries on athletics, the school calendar, cell phone policies, and concerns regarding hate and bias.

XI. DISCUSSION

- A. Joint School Committee Minutes November 5, 2025

A brief discussion was held on amending the November 5th meeting minutes to add in Section VIII Discussion, Item C Data Presentation, the final sentence should read *Ms. MacDougall and*

Mr. Williams noted the current reporting format made it difficult to track year to year academic performance of our student subgroups. Methods to address this were discussed.

Ms. Marano asked the committee members to vote to approve the minutes as originally written with all in favor saying aye, all against saying nay. The ayes had the majority, and the motion was carried.

B. Concord School Committee Minutes November 19, 2025

A brief discussion was held on amending the November 19, 2025, minutes to add in Section III Superintendent and Chair Update, Paragraph 2, the final sentence to read *Mr. Williams clarified that process questions regarding the incident could be answered in a manner that preserves the confidentiality of all parties.*

Mr. Williams moved and Ms. Marano seconded the motion to approve the November 19, 2025, minutes as amended. Roll was taken: Herchek, aye; Marano, aye; Pisharody, aye; Rankin, aye; Williams, aye.

C. 2026-2027 Calendar

Ms. Rankin moved and Ms. Kelleher seconded the motion to approve the 2026-2027 Calendar as presented. Roll was taken: Herchek, aye; Kelleher, aye; Marano, aye; Pisharody, aye; Rankin, aye; Williams, aye.

D. CCRSD FY27 CAPITAL PLAN

Mr. Conry presented the five-year CCRSD FY27 Capital Plan which proposed a strategic investment of \$1.5 million to maintain and upgrade district facilities and infrastructure. The Capital Plan included \$1 million for a multi-year football field turf replacement; a phased HVAC and lighting control overhaul; and the replacement of aging vehicles. To fund projects without relying on borrowing, the district is utilizing a multi-tiered financial strategy that includes a projected \$1.22 million from the Capital Stabilization Fund; \$226,000 from E&D reserves; the repurposing of OPEB contributions; and a scheduled \$75,000 building assessment in FY29 to ensure CCHS remains in peak condition.

Mr. Herchek moved and Ms. Rankin seconded the motion to approve the CCRSD FY27 Capital Plan as presented. Roll was taken: Herchek, aye; Kelleher, aye; Marano, aye; Pisharody, aye; Rankin, aye; Williams, aye.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Marano adjourned the meeting at 8:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Gilmore

Approved: February 4, 2026

Abbreviations:

CCHS Concord-Carlisle High School

CCRSD 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